

# ACROSS



# THE

# FACE OF

# FRANCE

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by James A. Huston

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**Liberation and Recovery, 1944-63**

# ACROSS THE FACE OF FRANCE

*Liberation and Recovery 1944-1945*

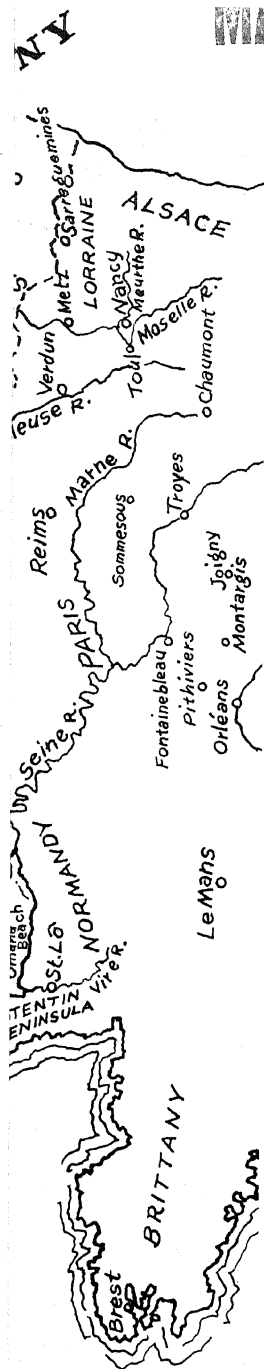
by JAMES

This book was "conceived in battle" some twenty years ago, when the author was fighting in France. He has returned to the scene four times since then, revisiting battle sites and old friends and exploring postwar developments in France.

From the Normandy beaches across France to the Saar, each locale provides a focal point for recalling its role in the liberation and related themes that are relevant two decades later. At Sainte-Mère Église, the author recalls D-Day operations and explores present-day implications. At Saint-Lô the theme is bombing and reconstruction. At Orléans he discusses problems of the American troops' return to France to man a line of communication.

Nancy brings to mind the Resistance. Sarreguemines, on the eastern frontier, has further implications for postwar economic recovery and a divided population; adjacent is the

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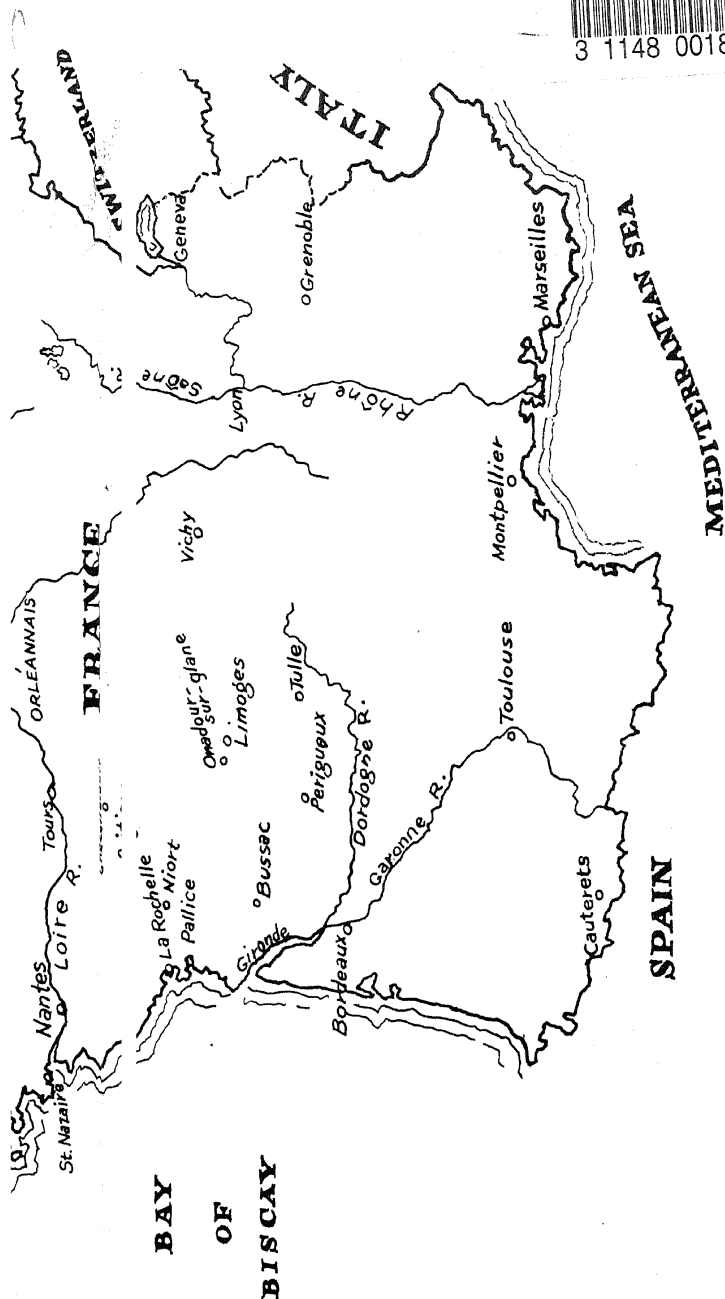


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# ACROSS THE FACE OF FRANCE



ACROSS THE FACE  
OF FRANCE

LIBERATION AND RECOVERY 1944-63

*By*

JAMES A. HUSTON

1963

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TO  
NITA DIANE  
and  
JIMMIE JACQUES

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## PREFACE

In a sense this book has been nearly twenty years in the making. It has its basis in the author's acquaintance with some aspects of certain parts of France made as a member of the 134th Infantry in 1944 and 1945, and on return visits in 1951, 1954, 1957, and 1962.

Each locale in a journey across France provides a focal point for various themes which seem to have some significance a decade or two after the liberation. At Sainte-Mère Église and on the Normandy beaches the D-Day operations are recalled, and some present-day implications explored. A sidelight to D-Day is to be found in the bitter and far-reaching sequel at Oradour-sur-Glane. At Saint-Lô it is bombing and reconstruction. Orléans provides the focal point for considering problems and implications incident to the return of American troops to France to man a line of communications. Nancy gives the setting for recalling the Resistance, and for reviewing some postwar economic activity. Sarreguemines, on the eastern frontier, has further implications for postwar economic recovery and a divided population, and it is adjacent to the Saarland, whose economic and political status was the subject of controversy again after World War II.

Through all this, problems are seen in terms of people, not people simply as an abstract mass, but as friends and neighbors. If France is viewed quickly in this way, across the provinces from border to border, perhaps it may be possible to understand something of France and of the impact of war a little better.

For consistent help in attempting to make these inquiries fruitful, an expression of deep gratitude must be made to many French friends all across France, and to members of the U.S. Army wherever they have come into the picture. Within the limits in which it is possible to express this appreciation individually I must mention Dr. and Mrs. J. Masselin, Mr. and Mrs. Alexandre Renaud and their son Paul of Sainte-Mère Église; Mr. Joseph-Alexandre Leclerc, Mr. A. Delaunay, and Mr. Adrien Hardy of Saint-Lô; Dr. and Mrs. J. Louyot and Dr. A. Beau of Nancy; Mr. and Mrs. Marcel Baue of Sarreguemines, and Captain Paul Cook, Captain A. L. Matthews, Captain Edward W. Peterson, Sergeant George Ratliff, Sergeant Johnnie D. Rutledge, and all the other officers and men of the U.S. Army, Europe, Communications Zone, who were so helpful. Purdue's University Editor, William J. Whalen, and members of his

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JAMES A. HUSTON

Lafayette, Indiana  
March, 1963



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PART ONE

# D-DAY PLUS TWENTY YEARS



# 1

## Sainte-Mère Église

On the night of June 5, 1954, people of Sainte-Mère Église, in the French department of Manche, on the Contentin Peninsula, joined by friends, relatives, and visitors, crowded into the big Quonset hut known as the "Hall Americain" for a *manifestation folklorique*. The occasion was the eve of the tenth anniversary of the town's liberation by American paratroops. Folk dancing groups, all in colorful costume, from Normandy, Alsace, Vosges, Bordeaux, and from Scotland performed dances typical of their regions. The crowd gave enthusiastic approval to each number.

A light rain was beginning to fall as people moved out to the streets at the conclusion of the folk dancing. A new floodlight played upon the tower of the old church near the Quonset hut, and street-lights caught colorful decorations on the lampposts along the street. While people waited impatiently for the ceremony commemorating the liberation to begin, the light rain turned into a downpour. Yet the crowd stood firm to await the meeting at the center of the town of the two torches of liberty—one French, the other American.

At last a small procession came down the street from the direction of the town hall. It was made up of a drum and bugle corps, a color guard with flags of France and the United States, and a detachment of boys, about ten years old, dressed as American paratroopers. Their make-up was complete even to the blackening of their faces. Several of the boys probably were born during the year of liberation—and doubtless the celebration of their tenth birthdays was not too far from the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the liberation. Now the French torch, beginning at the cemetery near the church came with the procession down Route Carentan. Soon another torch appeared from the opposite direction. It was a flame which had been lighted in Washington, D.C., carried by airplane to Paris, and

then by highway, through Carentan, to Sainte-Mère. Representatives of the American Legion were carrying this torch. After they met, both torches moved at the head of the procession to the town hall where the crowd soon concentrated.

Floodlights lighted up the town hall and the highway marker in front of it—the “0” kilometer marker on the “Liberty Highway.” The inscription on the front of the marker next to the street reads:

N<sup>o</sup> O  
Voie  
de la  
LIBERTÉ  
1944

And on either side there are inscriptions, one in French and the other in English, which read:

Ste Mère Église  
This was the first town  
to be liberated  
on the Western Front  
5-6 June 1944  
Saga of the All-American

The last line is a tribute to the 82nd Airborne—the “All American”—Division. This is the starting point of the “Way of Liberty,” which runs back to Cherbourg, and in the opposite direction all the way to Bastogne, with this special marker at every kilometer. A plaque centered at the forward edge of the grounds of the town hall reads:

En Hommage  
Aux Français de S<sup>te</sup> Mère Église  
Qui Ont Donné Leur Vie  
Pour Racheter Notre Liberté

For an hour the men stood holding the torches in the unrelenting, heavy rain, without wavering. And the people who had filled the street remained there until their special midnight mass was concluded. Colored decorations and flags were everywhere, and in spite of the rain their color stood out brilliantly in the darkened scene. The voices of a boy choir drifted out across the streets from the town hall to hearten dampened spirits. From the central doorway of the town hall, the priest celebrated mass—a memorial service for those who had died in the war, and an occasion of thanksgiving for the liberation. Here and there a few Americans could be spotted in the

crowd—here a major who had jumped with the 82nd Airborne Division ten years ago, now stationed in Germany, there an American newspaper correspondent—but residents of the town and their friends and relatives made up most of the crowd. Thoughts of the exciting and joyous and tragic events of that night just ten years ago seemed to add a chill to the already cold night rain for all of the gathered crowd who could remember.

In the years following, many former members of the 82nd Division returned to Sainte-Mère Église, some for another observance of the anniversary of liberation, others passing through when they could. Then, in 1961, local citizens watched the filming of scenes for the American motion picture *The Longest Day*, and felt the shock of reliving, seventeen years later, the high tension of June 6, 1944.

The Germans arrived at Sainte-Mère Église on June 18, 1940—four days before the French government signed armistice terms with the Nazis. Here the German army immediately began to push preparations for an invasion of England. After weeks of doubt and delays, it finally appeared that the great attack was scheduled for September. But it failed to come off. By the end of 1940 an army for offensive operations had become an army of occupation. The weeks of hostile military occupation turned into months and then years. Soon it became clear that all plans for an invasion of England had been abandoned. In fact, it was becoming evident that the Germans themselves now faced the prospect of meeting an invasion from the other direction.

On May 10, 1944, at eight o'clock in the evening, German officers came to Alexandre Renaud, mayor of Sainte-Mère Église, to ask for ten motor vehicles and for all available horses and men in the area. At first Renaud thought that the request was being made to assist some night maneuvers for the occupying forces, and he protested that this was a violation of the armistice agreement. But half an hour later he learned that the German unit was leaving Sainte-Mère Église for Vauville. The mayor was only too glad to cooperate in the evacuation of his town.

During the next few weeks a rising tenseness could be sensed among the people of Sainte-Mère Église. Talk of an Allied invasion, and liberation, was in the air. The place of the promised Allied landing had not been announced, but a nervous anticipation was running through the German soldiers in the feeling that Normandy was a likely place for the cross-channel attack to strike. By the end of the month the Germans had flooded the marshes along the Merderet River. Local citizens were inquiring anxiously of each other, "Where are the English?" All seemed to assume that it would be the English who would land here to effect their liberation. The growing certain-

ty on the part of the Germans that an invasion was coming in the Cotentin Peninsula quickly was communicated to the populace.

At nine P.M. on June 5 a broadcast of the BBC came clearly over local French radios—in French—"The poet makes verses . . . clouds hide the moon . . . the window is open . . . the garden will be blooming . . . it is warm in the desert." "*It is warm in the desert*"—for certain leaders of the Underground this was the alert signal. Curiously, German agents had succeeded in infiltrating several French Resistance groups, and on June 1 and 2 they had picked up twenty-eight of the BBC prearranged signals directing the Resistance to stand by for code messages for execution of sabotage plans. This information had gone to the central SS intelligence in Berlin, but there had attracted little serious attention. The German Western Command headquarters and Fifteenth Army intercepted some of the later BBC broadcasts on the night of June 5, but this made little difference to the German alertness. It appears that Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's intelligence officer put little stock in the warnings, for he thought it would be absurd for the Allies to make an advance announcement of their invasion over the BBC.

Later that night the heavy roar of bombardment along the coasts and great numbers of low-flying aircraft proclaimed that this was it. Official accounts suggest that the first American paratroopers dropped near Sainte-Mère Église between 1:30 and 2:30 A.M. on June 6. Local citizens still insist that the first American paratroopers arrived there between 11:00 and 11:30 P.M. on the fifth. (There was an hour's difference in the time—Britain was on British Double Summer Time.) Soon it seemed that the country was alive with these soldiers from the clouds.

More planes could be seen skimming through the clouds and across bands of moonlight. The crescendo of German *flak* and the burst of anti-aircraft shells disturbed the steady, monotonous roar of aircraft. A house near the edge of Sainte-Mère Église caught fire. Soon the flames seemed to light up the whole countryside, and the burning house became a reference point for more plane-loads of paratroops. Anxious Germans and hopeful Frenchmen watched in awe. By the firelight they could see clearly the big white canopies, legs dangling beneath, as their assailants and liberators descended upon them. One parachutist could be seen coming down directly toward the house. Frantically he tried to maneuver his shrouds—and then with a terrifying scream he dropped directly into the fire to be burned alive.

Several paratroopers came down in the area between the church, the doctor's house across the street where the Germans maintained their local headquarters, and the cemetery. A number of big shade trees here presented something of a hazard for a night parachute landing under any conditions. In such proximity to the German



headquarters this factor took much greater significance for the individuals for whom the height and speed of the airplane and the winds had been such at the moment of their jump into the darkness as to bring them down at precisely this point. One man drifted right past one of the big trees, and his 'chute caught on the upper branches. There he swung back and forth like a pendulum as he worked rapidly to try to get out of his harness. But Germans on the ground spotted him. Their frightened hearts had no room for mercy. From several yards away a machine gun opened fire. The hands dropped to the side and the body went limp.

Shortly afterward two other paratroopers came down in neighboring trees. They too were killed by machine-gun fire as they dangled helplessly in the air. A German soldier cried out to some Frenchmen who had gathered near the church, "Tommies parachutists, alles kaput!"

Quite to the contrary, these were American parachutists, and their numbers were increasing. Sounds of the little mechanical "crickets" which they carried for identification seemed to be coming from everywhere. Two or three men descended on the top of the church, and had to let themselves down by the ropes which they carried. One man, caught on the church steeple, "played dead" until hauled down and taken prisoner two hours later.

But the men who came down at or near the church, or near the southeast edge of Sainte-Mère Église represented but a small fraction of the Americans coming down by parachute into Normandy that night. Only one of the three parachute regiments assigned or attached to the 82nd Airborne Division did have a reasonably good pattern on the zone scheduled for it. This was the 505th Parachute Infantry which, together with division headquarters, landed in a fairly good concentration one-half to two and one-half miles east of Sainte-Mère Église—between the town and the Merderet River. Other elements of the 82nd Airborne Division were scattered for forty miles up and down the Cotentin Peninsula, as much as fifteen miles to the north and twenty-five miles to the south of the intended drop zones near Sainte-Mère Église, and from within two miles of Utah Beach inland fifteen miles to the vicinity of Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte.

Some twenty-five to thirty plane-loads of men of the 507th Parachute Infantry came down in the watery marshes along the Merderet River. While some marshlands were known to border the "river" (actually it is a creek), tall, thick grass had hidden the deep water. In the darkness it was difficult to distinguish swamp from meadow. As a result many paratroopers, heavily laden with equipment, soon found themselves struggling for their very lives in several feet of water and thick undergrowth. The problem of finding equipment and assembling thus was magnified manyfold.

American paratroopers in Normandy that night were, as the old army saying phrased it, "Scattered from Hell to breakfast." But the instructions to troop carrier and airborne units were not to return to base with a loaded plane. If a pilot could not find his exact drop zone, his paratroopers were to jump anyway. The airborne forces further were instructed and trained to fight wherever they might land. Clearly a great many of them did just that.

One of the time-honored principles of war is the "principle of mass"—the concentration of combat power at the decisive place and time. The descent of the 82nd Airborne Division on the Cotentin Peninsula was hardly in a concentrated pattern. Yet it was largely successful. Possibly it was successful in part because of the fact that it was *not* concentrated. Thanks to efforts of members of the French Resistance, communications lines had been cut and local German commanders found it most difficult to coordinate the actions of their units. Then came the distractions of the scattered paratroop drops. Well-planned counterattacks against paratroop concentrations were of little avail when no sizable concentrations could be located. A German unit might be sent off in one direction, only to hear firing break out in quite another as small groups of American paratroopers faithfully carried out their instructions to fight wherever they happened to land.

Some concentration of forces on the part of the Americans was necessary, nevertheless, before any key objectives could be taken and held. Actually the 82nd Airborne Division was able to carry out only one of its three assigned missions—and that was accomplished by the one regiment which had had a very good drop pattern northwest of Sainte-Mère Église. That regiment's job was to capture the town.

In this case the aircraft had been scattered, just as had those carrying the other regiments, as they approached the drop zone, but they had been able to circle back and permit the paratroopers to jump accurately at the place marked by the pathfinders who had preceded them. Assembling quickly in the early-morning hours, about a fourth of the men of the 3rd Battalion, the unit assigned with the specific mission of going into the town, moved swiftly toward their objective. The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Edward C. Krause, ordered his men to use only their bayonets, knives, and grenades, as they moved through the streets. Any firing of weapons in the darkness could be identified at once as enemy. Actually few enemy troops remained in the town.

Their equipment and uniforms giving them the appearance of men from another planet, the paratroopers surprised Norman farmers as well as German soldiers wherever they happened to encounter them. Some of the local populace took all the invaders to be Negroes, for they had blackened their faces; strange haircuts and face paint on others created the impression that they were Indians.

At one house a soldier went up to ask for some water. A rather apprehensive housewife opened the door. She was taken aback when she heard the strange-looking creature ask for some water in the French of her own familiar Norman diction and accent! How could this be? she wondered. Was this not an American? Indeed it was, but it happened that he was from Louisiana, and there he had learned to speak French with the accent and colloquialisms of the language of Normandy.

Some time later in the day, near the little farm village of Reigneville, another group of Americans was looking for some water. M. Lemenuel had just stepped out into his yard when he noticed someone signaling to him to come. He went over to find seventeen American soldiers, faces blackened with soot, crouching behind the hedgerow. "Have you water?" one of them asked. The Frenchman did not understand. The soldiers then made signs with their hands of drinking. Lemenuel went to get some cider, some wine, and some Calvados. The soldiers hesitated momentarily, tasted the drinks warily, and then drank them all down. Then they departed.

Shortly afterward a lone paratrooper, lost from his unit, arrived at the Lemenuel house. Sure that Germans were in the vicinity, Lemenuel hid the lost soldier in the cellar under a wine cask. (It turned out that he remained here nine days.) Presently the group of paratroopers returned. Now they were hungry. The French farmer went toward the house to get some bread and eggs and wine. But then Germans appeared all around. They were coming to search the farm. They were shouting and swearing and threatening. "Tommies are here. You are *kaput*!" they said. The Frenchman went with them to visit the house, and even the storeroom where the lone American was hiding under a cloth, holding his breath. At last the Germans gave up the search and moved off. Suddenly there was a burst of fire, and a German captain fell. The Germans hunted in vain for whoever had fired.

A few hours later an American paratrooper again came to the door of Lemenuel's house. He wanted to know where his comrades were. Lemenuel told him to come in quickly, for Germans were all about. The Frenchman led the soldier hurriedly down to the cellar. Just now the farmer's wife went out to feed the poultry. Their young son Paul and their pretty fifteen-year-old daughter Pierrette went out on the doorstep. A burst of fire rang out, and Pierrette fell to the ground. Lemenuel told the newly arrived American to run out the back way, and then he went to see what had happened. When he got outside Lemenuel saw the Germans coming into the yard. He showed them his daughter who lay bleeding from bullet wounds in her abdomen. They responded with an indifferent "C'est la Guerre."

Pierrette, the gay, pretty daughter of the Lemenuels, moaned weakly, "The Boches, they have killed me." A few hours later she died.

Other D-Day missions assigned the 82nd Airborne Division had included the securing of crossings of the Merderet creek near la Fièrè and Chef du Pont. Here marshlands along the Merderet appeared to be especially troublesome—though the marshes are not generally as extensive as they then appeared to be. (Ten years later, one could stand on the bridge west of Chef du Pont and count nearly two hundred cattle grazing in the broad meadows on the east bank of the stream—and directly in front of the big dairy plant.) Temporary bridgeheads at la Fièrè and Chef du Pont could not be held against the stronger German forces which were able to form against the small bands of paratroopers holding them.

The woman who operated the café across the street from the railroad station years later recalled vividly the arrival of the paratroopers. She had gone to sleep, only to be awakened between one two A.M. by the airborne invasion. Almost at once she guessed that American parachutists were coming. The Germans had left this area a week or so earlier, so that she felt confident of American success here. Unfortunately for the Americans, Germans returned to attack, and paratroop forces had not been dropped in such a pattern as would permit an effective build-up of a bridgehead to the west of the Merderet. The small groups holding the crossings at la Fièrè and Chef du Pont therefore had to give up those places for the time being.

At the end of D-Day the situation of the 82nd Airborne Division around Sainte-Mère Église remained obscure and tenuous. Apparently the beach landings had been successful, however, and the 101st Airborne Division, while somewhat scattered, had landed in much better concentrations than the 82nd. The 101st had been able to take its objectives, including Saint-Martin-de-Varreville and Pouppeville, and to secure the vital exits to these beaches which would permit the troops landing by sea to move inland. These tasks had been accomplished relatively quickly. But it was not until the next afternoon, June 7, that forces coming in from the beaches were able to link up effectively with the airborne forces at Sainte-Mère Église—and during the interval, Sainte-Mère Église was under heavy counterattack. Believing a German armored thrust to be building up, Maj. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, was able to get word to the corps commander, Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins. General Collins immediately ordered a task force from the 704th Tank Battalion to proceed directly to Sainte-Mère Église. The tanks rolled into the town early in the afternoon. Alexandre Renaud recorded it as follows: "A great cry went up: 'The tanks! The route to the sea is free, the coast is ours!' They were small tanks, but for us they were beautiful, they were great. At their observation posts on

the turrets, the crews looked at us, majestically as gods, powerful as giants. They were Victory; for us they were Deliverance!"

On the walls of a café on the main street of Sainte-Mère Église, a series of three colorful, impressive murals depict the liberation. One represents the night, and it pictures paratroopers dropping over the town while aircraft fly overhead—and a house burns below. In the second it is daytime; the American soldiers are on the ground, and again airplanes are flying overhead. In the third American tanks are shown rolling through the streets; forces from Utah Beach have made contact, and liberation is complete.

The zero marker of the Way of Liberty, in front of the town hall, is another effective daily reminder of the liberation. The heraldic emblem of Sainte-Mère Église itself, carved and painted on the outer walls of the town hall, now contains another element—figures of American paratroopers, descending under open parachutes. The official stationery also carries the parachute symbol. In the local bookstore one may find picture postcards, souvenirs of Sainte-Mère Église, which show drawings of pretty girls descending by parachute. The central square now is Place du 6 Juin, and the main street in 1960 was renamed Avenue du 505<sup>me</sup> Infanterie.

Most impressive indication of all, perhaps, of the esteem in which the American paratroopers are held is to be found in the church. As in so many towns of this area, the old stone church dominates Sainte-Mère Église, and its architecture, dating from the twelfth century, is common in this region. It is an old building, but the big stained-glass window over the main door is a new feature. The central figure in the window is a full-length picture of Mary, the mother of Jesus, holding the Christ child in her arms. On either side are figures of American paratroopers descending on Sainte-Mère Église! The window was designed by Paul Renaud, son of the mayor, who was a lad of fourteen at the time of the liberation.

Fortunately the early capture of Sainte-Mère Église spared this town the destruction from ground battles and aerial bombardment which became so general for towns throughout Normandy. It is true that German artillery, from positions in the village of Azeville to the south, kept Sainte-Mère under fire for three days (until local inhabitants discovered that the German artillery was being directed by observers in the church steeple), but the resulting damage was relatively light.

Liberation had come quickly and dramatically to Sainte-Mère Église, the first town in western Europe to fall to Allied arms in the great liberation. It was the beginning of a series which was to run into thousands as Allied armies—often with much greater violence—drove the Germans out.

Reconstruction here was not the problem which it proved to be elsewhere. Truly the economic dislocation which accompanied occupation and war was serious, but even that was less severe for Sainte-Mère Église than for many other communities. The loss of livestock had unfortunate consequences for this important dairy region, but still this was country where good food generally could be produced in quantity, and people usually could eat reasonably well.

A decade after liberation, Sainte-Mère Église bore few physical marks of the war which swept through and around it. Today Sainte-Mère Église is the old church, with American paratroopers immortalized in the stained-glass window. It is a group of people laughing and talking over glasses of wine as they sit in the café beside the big murals of the airborne liberation. It is the highly respected pharmacist, Alexandre Renaud, the former mayor, who goes about his work of filling prescriptions as he greets a stream of customers and friends, and it is his good wife and son, who radiate the same hospitality. Sainte-Mère is the restaurant down the street where local workers gather for their noon meal. It is the little dress shop which displays fashionable lace blouses and chic dresses from Paris. It is the local butcher and the bakery. It is the town hall and the school and the home for the infirm. It is personable young Dr. Jean Masselin, treating the ills of patients who come to the office in his house, or getting hurriedly into his car to bring medical care to people for miles around, and it is his attractive Parisian wife and their six children. Sainte-Mère Église is an active, thriving town of about 1,300 friendly, good humored, industrious, patriotic people. Physical scars of war have been erased, but people who lived through it will never forget the liberation, nor will inhabitants in the future, surrounded by monuments and reminders, be likely to forget it either.

Are the stories of Charles Martel, Charlemagne, William the Conqueror, and Napoleon, of a completely different order of things than the campaigns and battles of 1944? Or, in years to come, will the exploits of American parachutists on the Cotentin Peninsula in 1944 rise in men's esteem to match the most daring feats of the most celebrated warriors who ever passed through the country? Probably they will; for Sainte-Mère Église, American parachutists were indeed only "a little lower than the angels."

## 2

### Omaha Beach and Utah Beach

Omaha Beach, that stretch of sand lying before a backdrop of bluffs between Vierville-sur-Mer and Colleville-sur-Mer, prominent in 1944 as a stage for the intense action of amphibious invasion, now stands in contrasting emptiness. Then the beach was secondary to the events taking place on and around it; now it commands primary attention for itself. It is like a great theater, with vivid scenery still visible under a raised curtain, after the conclusion of a tragic drama, when all the actors and all the spectators have gone away, and a few caretakers go about their tasks nonchalantly. Omaha Beach now claims for itself the dark wrecks of boat hulls and the ruins of blasted pillboxes. The thunder of gunfire, the roar of motors, and the sharp exchanges of agitated voices all have given way to the soft breaking of the waves upon the sand. Still the bluffs attract a certain bit of the respect that was theirs when they provided sites for hostile observers and gun emplacements. On a hillside near the east side of the site of the landings, a monument commands the whole beach. It is the monument of the 5th Engineer Special Brigade—one of the units which shuttled back and forth with amphibious trucks (DUKW'S) and landing craft to deliver supplies from ships to shore. The monument's foundation is a concrete pillbox which commanded the beach on D-Day.

Down the beach to the west, down the road from Saint Laurent-sur-Mer near the little settlement known as Les Moulins, stands a French monument to the American soldiers who fought on this beach. It is not far from that part of the beach designated "Dog Green" on D-Day—where Company A of the 116th Infantry suffered nearly 75 per cent casualties, including virtually all the officers and noncommissioned officers, in crossing the 150 yards of open beach toward the draw which was to serve as their exit.

On the bluff is the cemetery, a spot of solemn beauty overlooking the sea. Officially this now is designated the American Normandy Cemetery, but it still is referred to here as the St. Laurent Cemetery (although it actually is closer to Colleville than it is to St. Laurent). Here are 9,385 graves, each marked by a cross or a star of David carved in Italy of Carrara marble. The gleaming white crosses, "row on row," stand out sharply against the rich green grass on which they rest.

A monumental central mall, laid out like a formal garden, divides the fields of crosses. Workmen still are busy tending the grounds, but major construction is finished, so that the scene impresses its dignity and beauty on all who visit there. On the mall, near the east end, are the "Garden of the Missing"; then a big semicircular memorial colonnade with huge maps showing the campaigns in Normandy and into Germany; a circular court, paved in stone and bordered by dark evergreen shrubs; a rectangular reflecting pool, and then a long rectangular court of grass leading to a small stone chapel. The chapel stands near the center of the four sections into which the burial grounds are divided. Two high flagpoles, each flying the Stars and Stripes, flank the mall.

This inscription is carved on the frieze of the memorial colonnade:

THIS EMBATTLED SHORE, PORTAL OF FREEDOM, IS FOREVER  
HALLOWED BY THE IDEALS THE VALOR AND THE SACRIFICES  
OF OUR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN

As one walks by the rows of crosses, he may find himself looking for names of soldiers he knew or otherwise have some association for him. There is Private First Class Flager of Michigan, who died on this beach on D-Day. There is another, Private Murray of Pennsylvania. There are the names of other men who were killed on D-Day over near Sainte-Mère Église, men of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, and pilots of troop carrier groups—names such as Schinkveth, Boehm, Smith, Doerges, Shipley, Rivas, Bruno. Here is the grave of Technical Sergeant Richard H. Weiser of Nebraska, a member of the 134th Infantry who was killed on July 17, as his unit approached Saint-Lô. And rather frequently one notices a marker with the inscription, "Here rests in honored glory a comrade in arms known but to God."

The chapel is a small, circular building. A series of stone columns goes all the way around, enclosing a small room containing a black marble altar. In the ceiling of the dome is a mosaic depicting a soldier, a ship, an airplane, and angelic figures representing the spirit of liberty, against a background of sky blue. Outside, on the frieze, another carved inscription appears:



THESE ENDURED ALL AND GAVE ALL THAT JUSTICE AMONG  
NATIONS MIGHT PREVAIL AND THAT MANKIND MIGHT EN-  
JOY FREEDOM AND INHERIT PEACE

One wonders, do these noble expressions carry real meaning, or do they represent the hollow sentiments of someone who had to put up a tribute which would be more or less reassuring to visitors who would come here questioning why all this sacrifice had to be? Or, perhaps people too anxious to dismiss such expressions are looking for ways to ease their own responsibilities. If those words are to have any meaning at all they must apply to the living no less than to the dead. Soldiers seldom express themselves in such language. As cold, seasick, nervous men huddled together in their landing craft, approaching this beach on June 6, 1944, it is quite doubtful whether many of them were thinking, in any precise way, about such abstract sentiments as patriotism, liberty, or justice. Most of them simply felt that here was a job that had to be done, and it had fallen to them to do it, and they wondered how long it would take to get it over, and they wondered with some apprehension what awaited them on the shore. They were sure that many of their number would be killed within a few hours, yet most probably did not seriously think of themselves as really likely to share such a fate. At the same time there probably was some very deep, unexpressed feeling, a vague feeling about the defense of their homeland and loved ones, and perhaps some undefined conviction that they were sailing against injustice and tyranny—a basis which, with the discipline of training and the social pressure of the comrades around them, made it possible to face the ordeal which they knew lay ahead. But such sentiments seldom became articulate. Instead there was almost complete preoccupation with things going on outside, with attention to equipment, to small talk and banter, to nervous buffoonery, and then complete silence except for the waves and the boats.

Farms and villages in the beachhead area still bear scars of war, though most damaged buildings have been restored, and life goes on much as before. Though directly in the path of the D-Day attack, Saint Laurent and Colleville escaped serious damage. Here and there the ruins of a war-torn building may be found, now and then a new wall testifies to the repair of war damage, and the pock-marks of machine gun and rifle bullets remain on the sides of some of the buildings. All the church steeples are new, for the old ones were victims of the highly accurate naval gunfire which sought the German observation posts on D-Day. Vierville suffered more serious damage than Saint Laurent or Colleville, but even there the damage was nothing like the general destruction that one finds in places like Caen or Saint-Lô. Possibly those little towns of Vierville, Saint Laurent, and Colleville owe their survival to the bad weather on the

morning of D-Day which restricted Allied air support, and to the fact of their very location so close to the beach that they fell into American hands on D-Day and the day after.

American influence persists in this area — and not always in the most complimentary terms. Years later, a group of workers along the road between Colleville and the cemetery paused briefly to discuss their recollections of the “debarquement.” One of them was able to speak a little English, and he was anxious to try it out. Curiously he introduced almost every phrase with, “Holy Christ!” Other professions of profanity and obscenity made up a sizable part of his English vocabulary. Clearly he resorted to such language profusely because otherwise he would have been able to speak hardly any English at all. It turned out that he was a boy of thirteen, living on a farm east of Colleville, when the invasion came. Attracted to the American soldiers, he attached himself to one of the companies and won a permanent assignment to kitchen police. He had learned his English in a G.I. kitchen.

These youthful French volunteers later were to be found in many American units going across France. They had no authorization, but if they appeared to be without a family in the vicinity, the G.I.'s were glad to have them come along to do all kinds of odd jobs. Often they were picked up and carried along by infantry companies or battalions without any reference to higher headquarters. A boy of about fourteen joined the 3rd Battalion, 134th Infantry, during the “race across France” east of Orléans. The men had fitted him out with some ill-fitting clothes and a steel helmet. During a temporary pause in the pursuit, when personal neatness was being re-emphasized again, the division commander descended on the battalion for a surprise visit. The first thing he saw when he entered the partially ruined building which was serving as a command post was the French boy. There he stood in his sloppy uniform, without leggings or boots, wearing a civilian belt and knapsack, shirt tail out, peering out from under that big steel helmet like a lookout in a pillbox. The general stopped in his tracks, spun around, and in the most bellicose language demanded from the lad an explanation for such unmilitary behavior. The boy had not been around long enough to pick up even the most common terms of profanity, so that he had not the slightest idea of what was happening; nor had he learned to be impressed by stars. He stood there in amazed silence. Then he gave one of those infuriating shrugs of the shoulders and turning down of the lips by which the French signify complete lack of comprehension and concern, and turned and walked away. This was the signal for everyone who could to disappear. A quick explanation of the boy's status seemed to appease the general partially, but it probably also was the termination of effective use of this kind of special service personnel in the division.

Along the road just outside Saint Laurent an old man cutting grass with a sickle recalled how it had been here on D-Day. He was living in the same house, but in 1944 he had some Germans as uninvited guests. No warning, of course, could be given to the civilian population (other than the tips to Resistance leaders via BBC broadcasts) before the beach assault, so that it all was as much a surprise to the local inhabitants as to the Germans. The old farmer told of the excitement of D-Day, and how his house was hit by shell fire, but not totally destroyed.

Several other small towns lie along the main coastal highway, the road running in this sector from Bayeux to Isigny, paralleling the Vierville-Saint Laurent-Colleville road two to four miles further inland. These towns include Mosles, Formigny, Longueville, and la Cambe. Like those nearer the sea, these towns too escaped any general destruction. Formigny stands at the junction of roads leading to Vierville and Saint Laurent, and the Germans fought for it so bitterly that American units were not able to enter until the morning of June 8. Yet this defense was in the fields in front of the town, and not so much in the town itself. Once the defense was broken, the Germans withdrew on through the town to take up positions again some three kilometers to the south. As a result the town was spared heavy destruction.

It seems incredible, in this age of radio, radar, high-speed aircraft, and fast patrol boats, that an invasion the size of that of the Allies could have come across the English Channel and caught a supposedly alert German army by surprise. Yet that is what happened. A fortuitous combination of circumstances resulted in a surprise more complete than anything for which Allied leaders ever dared hope.

In planning for the invasion of England in 1940 (Operation Sea Lion), German officers had arrived at the same conclusion as had the British and Americans in determining the timing of the most favorable conditions for a cross-channel attack. Both had decided that landings should take place on the beaches about three hours after low tide, at early dawn, though with enough daylight to permit naval and air bombardment of coastal defenses in advance, and with a half-moon to give some light for the handling of the invasion fleet during a crossing of the channel at night. These conditions occurred together only for a period of three days once a month. During June, the fifth was the beginning of this three-day period. It should have been clear to the Germans, on the basis of their own planning, that the period of June 5-7 would be an especially dangerous one. Yet the weather and other factors operated against German vigilance, and an Allied fleet of more than six thousand ships was able to leave the ports of southern England in broad daylight and then proceed during

the night to within a few miles of the French coast without any interruption and without the Germans knowing about it.<sup>1</sup>

German intelligence had been able to get accurate information about the strength and disposition of forces in southern England. Through the activities of a private operative in Turkey, Berlin even had learned the date for D-Day. The Luftwaffe had been able to continue aerial reconnaissance, including photography, over the ports of southern England up to May 24. Analyzing the results of this reconnaissance, the German Naval Command in Paris concluded that the Allies had not yet assembled enough ships to carry the anticipated invasion. On June 4 the Naval Command had reported to the Luftwaffe Special Command, "At the present moment, no immediate major invasion is to be expected."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most important element contributing to the surprise was the one which worried Allied leaders the most—the weather. The same stormy weather which caused General Eisenhower to postpone the invasion twenty-four hours also caused German security forces to relax their watch. Steaming through the heavy seas then running in the English Channel, the Allied invasion fleet encountered no dreaded mines, no reconnaissance or attack aircraft, and no naval outposts—until it was so close to the French coast that warnings could not be relayed to major coastal defense units before Allied armies were hitting the beaches in full force.

Because of Allied air superiority and unfavorable weather, the German Third Air Force, charged with reconnaissance over the Channel and with anti-invasion bombing of the English coast, had been unable to carry out its mission. No reconnaissance planes were covering the Channel on the night of June 5-6, even though this was, except for the unfavorable weather, what could have been considered a critical period. The naval forces also failed to go out on that fateful night. Moreover the Allied air forces in their pre-invasion bombing had succeeded in destroying much of the radar net and the communications system which the Germans had carefully set up along the French coast.

The German radio listening service did pick up a number of clues suggesting that invasion was imminent—broadcasts of the BBC to the French Resistance, continuous weather reports to major American combat units, the concentration of large formations of aircraft in the area north of London. All this was enough to move Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, the German commander in chief in the west, to order an alert for all coastal sectors in the Fifteenth Army—in the Pas de Calais region. The Seventh Army, in Normandy, was

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<sup>1</sup> "Normandy, 1944," trans. and digested in *Military Review*, XXXIV (Feb. 1955), 86-93, from an article by former Rear Admiral Kurt Assmann in *Deutsche Soldaten Zeitung*, July 1, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

not alerted until 1:30 A.M., and by this time Allied parachute units were already landing. After receiving reports, at 2:15, of the airborne landings, von Rundstedt within fifteen minutes issued orders to move the 12th SS Panzer Division forward toward Lisieux, and for the Panzer Training Division, then northwest of Orléans, to prepare to move. At this point the Wehrmacht High Command (OKW) intervened to order both panzer divisions to remain in place. Reports sent back by light naval forces sent out to meet a concentration of Allied vessels which had been picked up on a German radar screen at Port-en-Bessin shortly after three A.M., further convinced von Rundstedt that a major landing was in the making. But further appeals to the High Command for release of the panzer divisions at that time were to no avail.

Hitler, then at Obersalzberg, was permitted to sleep undisturbed. He did not learn of the attack until the regular noon conference with his staff.

The High Command did not release the 12th SS Panzer Division until early afternoon on June 6. By this time Allied air domination had become so complete that it was not possible to move major units until nightfall. The result was that the movement of this division was delayed for almost a whole day—the critical first twenty-four hours during which Field Marshal Rommel had insisted all along the battle would be won or lost.

After some preliminary planning during the previous year, Hitler had decreed in March 1942 that defenses of the European coast be organized in such a way that any invasion could be beaten at or near the water's edge.

The following summer he had called for the construction of bomb-proof gun emplacements and concrete pillboxes which would provide interlocking bands of machine-gun fire across beaches all along the coast in front of this great "Atlantic Wall" which, when finished, would comprise a new "Siegfried Line" of 15,000 concrete strong-points to be garrisoned by 300,000 troops. Material shortages and lack of labor had slowed the work, so that it never approached the completeness which Hitler had envisioned.

As it developed, the disposition of German troops represented something of a compromise between two divergent views on the best way to defend the French coast. Von Rundstedt held that the only way to defeat the expected Allied invasion was to defend the coast relatively lightly, and to concentrate in the interior sizable mobile reserves which could counterattack to throw the enemy back into the sea after the place and strength of the landing was made known. The Germans were not strong enough to defend everywhere, he thought, so that if they did not hold out major reserves for counterattack, they would not be able to hold anywhere. The General Staff upheld von Rundstedt in this view. Rommel insisted, on the other hand, that

the Germans' only hope for repelling the invasion was to defeat it on the beaches. He believed that the issue would be decided in the first twenty-four to forty-eight hours. Hitler shared the view of Rommel.

Rommel's view did not prevail altogether, but the defensive organization tended to be in that direction. Even Rommel did not plan to put every man in a blockhouse or trench overlooking the beaches, but he wanted to maintain mobile reserves close to the front line where they would be available for local counterattacks within the critical first twenty-four hours. He was only partially successful in gaining his way.

Rommel opposed the von Rundstedt notion of a mobile defense, not on any doctrinaire grounds, but on the basis of practical experience. He saw that the Allies would be weakest at the moment of their landing, when units and weapons could not be controlled as effectively as after reorganization and movement inland. Here the English Channel afforded the greatest natural obstacle that could be found, and the beaches and bluffs and the draws leading up from the beaches provided ideal sites for additional obstacles and for gun emplacements and other defensive works. But what seemed to impress Rommel more than anything else was the Allied command of the air. His experience against Allied air superiority in North Africa had convinced him that reserves held out in the interior would not be able to move. It was not a question, as he saw it, of which type of defense was preferable; it was a question of which was possible. If major troop movements were to be made impossible by the Allied air forces, then there was no alternative to deploying the troops at or near the beaches. With neither naval superiority nor air superiority, the Germans had two strikes against them from the very outset.

But if the prepared defenses along the Normandy coast were much weaker than plans had called for, and much weaker, even, than Allied leaders had thought, the men who went ashore on Omaha Beach that June 6 found them formidable enough. The concrete bunkers and casemates were sufficiently sturdy, and in particular places sufficiently numerous to constitute very serious hazards for any invader.

In the strongly defended sectors the concrete pillboxes and shelters, considered "bombproof," had walls and tops of a standard thickness of six feet, six inches. Some of them were ten feet or more thick. In less strongly defended areas, three-foot-three-inch "splinter-proof" pillboxes and shelters had to do. In the areas selected for the American assault, sixteen coastal batteries of four to six guns each were in position to fire.

Already postponed in its sailing twenty-four hours because of bad weather, the Allied invasion fleet was riding through heavy seas, nearing the coast of Normandy, when D-Day broke gray and cool over the English Channel. Some six thousand ships and smaller craft

here comprised the greatest invasion fleet of all time. Assault waves were scheduled to hit Omaha Beach at 6:45 A.M. The ships had left the English ports (for the second time) early on June 5. By about 2:30 A.M. on the sixth day they were arriving at the assembly areas about seven miles off the coast. Soon the assault troops began unloading from transport ships into the smaller landing craft which would carry them to the shore. About 5:30 the assault craft began moving toward the beach, while naval units took up formations to support the landings by gunfire. Some sporadic firing from German coastal batteries began about five minutes later, and just fifteen minutes after that the allied battleships, cruisers, and destroyers opened up their thunderous preparatory fires on the beaches and bluffs.<sup>3</sup>

Except for the bad weather, the channel crossing had, up to this point, been quiet. Winds were reaching a velocity as high as twenty-five miles an hour, and waves as high as six feet were running in the channel. The sky was gray, and low-hanging clouds made air support difficult. Yet for the operation as a whole the weather undoubtedly had contributed a great deal to the complacency and ineffective actions of German security units.

So far, it has been said, all had gone well. But soon after the landing craft began their seven-to-ten mile run to the beach, several things began to go wrong. The heavy seas were too much for a number of the landing craft, and at least ten of them, loaded with infantry, were swamped on the way in. Much hope had been placed in some duplex-drive amphibious tanks which were being counted on to land armored support for assault units on the beach. Twenty-nine of these tanks were launched about six thousand yards off the shore, but they began to sink almost at once. Only two of the tanks were able to "swim" to the shore, and three others arrived only because the LCT (landing craft, tank) carrying them had been unable to lower its ramp at sea, and so carried them all the way in. Moreover the field artillery which was being counted upon to support the infantry attacks inland failed to reach the shore in effective numbers.

As the landing craft moved in close to the beach, the men in some of them, waiting to wade ashore, were disheartened by the splatter of machine-gun bullets against the steel ramps of the craft. Some of the soldiers, loaded with heavy combat equipment, went over the side, and in some cases they dropped into water over their heads. Others dashed down the ramp through a hail of bullets to seek refuge in the deep water behind some of Rommel's exposed beach obstacles. A number of men fell wounded on the beach, and lay helplessly to be

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<sup>3</sup> For excellent accounts of the D-Day landings, see Gordon A. Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, (Washington, 1951), 269-335; also Charles H. Taylor, *Omaha Beachhead* (Washington, 1945), and R. G. Ruppenthal, *Utah Beach to Cherbourg* (Washington, 1947) published in the Department of the Army's "American Forces in Action Series."

drowned in the rising tide. Some "froze" under the heavy fire at the water's edge, and ultimately crawled in with the tide. Generally those who were able to keep moving—those who hurried, as best they could, resolutely through the fire to the bluffs or an intervening sea wall—fared better.

Other difficulties developed in effecting the landing. Poor visibility and a west-east current along the beach led to some errors in landing. The errors were not great, but they did lead to confusion, to scattering of some units, and in some cases to dangerous bunching of men. Mislandings, together with the heavy German fire, made reorganization of units on the beach virtually impossible.

Carefully laid plans for the landing of specific units at specific spots on the beach, and close time schedules to govern the landings of reinforcements, quickly went awry. The arrival of succeeding waves on the beaches before the first had cleared only confounded the confusion. Wounded and dead men lay all along the beach, and other men lay motionless, pinned down by the heavy fire, to become mingled with men of other units landing after them. Yet when it seemed that surely the whole effort must bog down, a few determined leaders—officers and enlisted men—by the very force of their personalities picked up small collections of men and began to move inland up the draws and slopes.

When such detailed plans as those which had been drawn for the assault on Omaha Beach go astray, the question naturally arises whether there was any value in making such plans. The one thing most certain among the uncertainties of an attack of this kind is that the operation will not go according to the detailed plans. In a broader sense one may find some merit in thorough battle planning simply from the fact that this planning involves a careful consideration of all the factors involved. When some new factor is introduced and all the plans have to be thrown out, adjustment to the new situation nevertheless comes about more easily and with greater assurance simply because those concerned already have considered carefully all the other elements, and they are familiar with the basic data. However, in the stricter sense of mapping detailed plans for each boatload and each platoon of the assaulting forces, such as had been done for the Omaha Beach force, "prior planning" may actually work to the disadvantage of the effort. In this case the plan left little place for flexibility and improvisation, although it is improvisation which generally pays off in this kind of operation. Most of the assault units here ran into very heavy fire, and suffered serious casualties and confusion. Detailed briefings on identification of landmarks and beach exits were of little avail, for most of the units did not land where they were supposed to anyway. One wonders whether the confusion and the casualties could have been any greater with-



out any small-unit plans at all. It is conceivable that a deliberate policy of flexibility and improvisation might have accomplished more at much less cost.

For instance, most of the small units of the assault wave immediately encountered strong resistance on the beaches. The one notable exception to this was the fortuitous landing of four boat sections of Companies E and F of the 16th Infantry. They landed some distance to the east of the place designated, and a good distance from other elements of the same regiment. They hit a blind spot in the German defenses, and those men were able to get across the open beach with only two casualties. But for a long while no one else was in a position to take advantage of this situation. Instead, other boatloads continued to land in the face of withering fire and to become intermingled with units already pinned down. Might it not have been practical to send patrol boats carrying infantry patrols in advance to seek out soft spots in the defense? Then when an undefended spot had been found, signals could be hoisted at the base of the bluff and radio messages sent back to direct succeeding waves to pour ashore where they could exploit the enemy's weakness. Inland objectives could be given the company commanders after they were already on the way in, or even after they had landed and reorganized. Naval guns or aircraft might even mark beaches and inland objectives with colored smoke, after the landing craft already were underway.

As it was, movement off the beaches did not even begin for over an hour after the first landings. In a critical hour between 10:30 and 11:30 close-supporting naval fire became more effective, and assaulting infantry forced a penetration of some of the defenses. By noon it seemed that the beachhead would be held—barring a strong counterattack—but progress was slow throughout the day. By the end of the day most of the immediate defense areas had been overcome, Vierville-sur-Mer and Saint Laurent-sur-Mer had been taken, and though the Germans still held Colleville-sur-Mer, sizable American forces virtually surrounded it. Though defenses in the area had not been completed in the way Rommel had hoped, the effectiveness there of the effort in breaking up the assaulting units suggested that Rommel's system of defense had much to recommend it. If Rommel had had the panzer division that he wanted for counterattack, it might have made a big difference, at least for the time being.

One further factor that had been helpful for the Americans was the British and Canadian assaults which had been going on simultaneously on the beaches a few miles to the east of Omaha designated "Juno," "Gold," and "Sword." The British had broken through the coastal defenses in several places, so that the Germans did not dare

shift any defense units or local reserves from the Caen area to the American zone.

Meanwhile, the landings on Utah Beach on the Cotentin Peninsula, had been proceeding more smoothly. There errors in landing had played a more decisive, and more fortunate, role than on Omaha Beach.

This peninsula often had been the site of invasion before. In 1106 Henry I of England landed at Barfleur to march against his brother, the Duke of Normandy; Edward III landed near there in 1346 with the army which later won fame at the Battle of Crécy; the English seized Cherbourg in 1418; the Comte de Montgomery, the Huguenot leader who had taken refuge in England, landed at La Hougue at the head of an ill-fated English army of five thousand men in 1574; men from an English fleet again seized Cherbourg in 1758. But no earlier invasion could compare with that of 1944 either in magnitude or in the impact which it had on the whole population.

On Utah Beach the 8th Infantry of the 4th Division (with the 3rd Battalion of the 22nd Infantry attached), under the command of Colonel James A. Van Fleet, led the way. H-hour was 6:25 A.M.—ten minutes earlier than Omaha. Here the waters were more sheltered by the Cotentin Peninsula than at the other landing sites, and the landing craft moved in toward the shore with little difficulty.

Accompanying the first wave of the 4th Division's assault forces on Utah Beach was Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, colorful son of the illustrious first President Roosevelt. He had begged General Omar Bradley for an assignment with the invasion—after already surviving landings in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and Corsica—and General Bradley had decided that the greatest service which Roosevelt could perform on D-Day would be to go in with the leading wave of this untried division to steady the men under fire on the beaches. Among the first men to reach the Beach was General Roosevelt. To their surprise, the men of these leading units had reached land without arousing serious German counterfire. The General flattened himself on the sand, in the midst of a group of soldiers, and surveyed the land ahead with his binoculars. "By Jove!" he exclaimed, as he crawled up a low sand dune for a better look.

One of the soldiers near him sang out, "My God! We're in France!"

But Roosevelt was not listening. Half to himself, and half to his aide, he muttered, "We've missed it. There has been a mistake. We are in the wrong place!" Then he started swearing while he considered quickly what ought to be done. On the one hand was the practical impossibility of redirecting the whole invasion to the place where they were supposed to land, two thousand yards up the coast. On the other hand he recognized the difficulties involved in trying

to find other exits from the beach across the inundated swampland, or of trying to find the causeways that the paratroopers were supposed to be securing opposite the landing site designated in the plans. Roosevelt noticed a causeway leading through the marshes directly ahead. Immediately deciding that the only thing to do now was to go for it, he called the two battalion commanders who had landed with the assault wave, and told them to do just that. Some intervening concrete blockhouses were knocked out, and the 4th Division was on its way inland.

Apparently coastal landmarks had become obscured in the smoke of the preliminary naval gunfire, and for this and other reasons such as coastal current, the assault waves hit the beach some two thousand yards to the south, that is, to the left, of the intended place. Surprisingly enough, men going ashore on Utah Beach found little German resistance. Leading companies quickly overcame the few pillboxes and the small German garrisons holding field fortifications near the beach exits. But when a battalion moved up the beach to the north to extend the beachhead, it ran into strong resistance—at the place where the landing was *supposed* to have come!

Although casualties on Utah Beach were light, and the landings relatively easy, there were still casualties. Death and pain still were present. Some of the landing craft hit mines and sank. German artillery and machine-gun fire was sporadic, but that made it no less fatal for the soldiers it happened to hit. As the boats carrying men of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry, approached the shore, some of them came under machine-gun fire. Officers led the way in jumping over the sides into the waist-deep water. Weapons held high over their heads, the men waded in. But then machine-gun fire found some of them again. Some fell dead in the water; others fell wounded, and drowned in the surf. Other men reacted with the natural tendency to stop and get down. Lieutenants shouted to them to keep moving. Some of them carried satchel charges which would be used to blow up the pillboxes ahead, but first they had to reach them. It is always easy to forget the old rule, "Move forward out of artillery fire," and officers had to keep urging them on. One young lieutenant got some of his men to shore, but others held back. He went back to them, shouting, "For God's sake, if you want to live, move forward!" And just at that moment a German artillery shell burst beside him and cut through his head.

No bluffs dominated Utah Beach, such as those at Omaha. Only a sea wall and some low sand dunes stood between the beach and the fields beyond. The greatest obstacle were the lowlands which had been flooded so that troop movements were restricted to the roads across them. Paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division had seized the causeways through the inundated areas, and units of the 4th Division hurried across them. Within two to three hours the

beach area had been cleared and landings of reinforcements had become virtually routine.

As scores of bombs fell around his house near the coast during the pre-invasion bombardment, Pierre Lenourry had more reason than the danger of the bombs to be in a cold sweat. His wife had just given birth to a baby girl. A neighbor woman had been in earlier to help, but now she had gone. Pierre felt an awful helplessness as bombs shook the house violently, and he crawled from under an overturned wardrobe which had pinned him down momentarily, and found broken stones scattered over his wife's bed and over the beds of two other children, four and two, who slept peacefully through the thunderous bombardment. He looked at his wife, pale and weak from loss of blood, and then at the new baby, crying feebly in a baby carriage near its mother. It was impossible to call a doctor, or even neighbors. They would just have to wait here as best they could. At last daylight came, and Pierre stepped outside to see if he could find some help. He ran directly into some American soldiers who had just come ashore. Wary of who were their friends, they pointed their rifles at him. He raised his hands and shouted "Français, Français!"

Then he began telling them about his wife. But they did not understand him. They took him along until he met some other soldiers, but they paid no attention to him either. Much to his consternation he soon found himself behind barbed wire with German prisoners on the beach. He chafed there for an hour, and then a soldier took him to an officer for a long interrogation, and back he went to the barbed wire. Hours passed, while his worries about his family and anger at being held prisoner with the "Boches" grew. Presently he was surprised at the arrival of half a dozen of his friends and neighbors—also to be confined as prisoners! In the evening they were put aboard a boat, where they faced further interrogation and searching. At high tide they were transferred to a cargo ship. For four days they were passed around from one ship to another, and then on June 10 they wound up in England. There Pierre—and his neighbors—had to remain for five weeks before he could get back to see how his family was. Fortunately he found his wife and all three children well. During the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the D-Day landings, the little girl born in the midst of the bombardment near Utah Beach was celebrating her tenth birthday.

Colonel Edson D. Raff arrived on the beach late in the afternoon of D-Day with elements of the 82nd Airborne Division's "seaborne tail." These included some glider infantrymen and a company of tanks. His job was to get these tanks through to the 82nd, now fighting near Sainte-Mère Église, and in addition to clear glider landing areas north of the village of Les Forges (south and southeast of Sainte-Mère Église) where glider artillery was scheduled to land

that evening. This was a novel tactical use of airborne forces. Generally it was assumed that airborne forces would go into an area and hold a position to clear the way for a link-up with surface forces. But in this case units had been sent in by sea to secure an area for airborne troops to land. It might have been far simpler to send the airborne artillery in by sea in the first place. All it had to do was to get within range and establish communications in order to give effective artillery support. Artillery did not have to be linked up with the parent unit on the ground, it could just as well have moved in behind units of the 4th Division. But the schedule had been set up, and apparently it had to be followed through come hell or high water. And the selected landing sites were at the very place where important German troop concentrations now were to be found. Colonel Raff made several efforts to break through, but after the loss of three tanks, gave up the effort. But no word went out to the glider units scheduled to land here. Precisely on schedule, at 7:00 P.M., the tow planes roared in low over the area, and about sixty gliders cut loose to go down into a storm of German machine-gun and anti-aircraft fire. Many crashed, and others were captured as soon as they landed. The artillerymen and pilots who survived the landings and escaped capture joined Colonel Raff's force to form a makeshift defense for the night.

On Utah Beach itself casualties on D-Day had been relatively light. The total for the whole 4th Division were fewer than two hundred—not many more than those suffered by two companies in the first forty-five minutes on Omaha Beach. Sainte Marie du Mont had been taken quickly—and there began an argument which still goes on, whether Sainte-Mère Église, liberated by the 82nd Airborne Division but not yet linked up with the beachhead, or Sainte Marie du Mont, liberated by the sea landing forces, should be honored as the first French town to be liberated in this great invasion.

With the fall of Carentan on June 12, the Allies held a consolidated beachhead seven to ten miles deep, extending from Quineville, on the Cotentin Peninsula, about seventy miles, to the east bank of the Orne River. Already, in the first six days of the operation, 326,547 men, 54,186 vehicles, and 104,428 tons of supplies had been brought in over these beaches.

Though German resistance in the days ahead grew stronger, and obviously many days of bitter fighting through the difficult hedgerow country lay ahead, complete Allied victory now was a matter of time and casualties—costly but certain. In spite of underdeveloped defensive works, and the complete tactical surprise which the Allies had achieved, they found that German resistance could not be overcome easily. Almost immediately the Allied time schedule was upset. The beachheads were supposed to be consolidated, according to plans, on D-Day; that did not come about until six days

later. Cherbourg was supposed to be taken by D plus 15 (earlier plans had indicated that it should be taken in a week); the peninsula was not cut until June 18 (D plus 12), though three divisions launched a strong attack to the north early the next morning, and the port city fell on June 26. This was only five days behind the tentative schedule, but it was an important five days. A violent four-day storm which struck the beach areas on June 19 had left Omaha and Utah beaches, as well as the British beaches, strewn with wreckage. Artificial harbors and landing craft were disabled, and over-the-beach supply operations had to be virtually suspended. This had made all the more urgent the capture of a major port, though as it turned out the Cherbourg port facilities had been so badly demolished that the port could not be put into operation until July 19, and its full capacity was not restored until October. Sainte-Lô, according to original plans, was scheduled to fall to V Corps by about D plus 9; the capture of that town came on July 18, after six weeks of heavy fighting through the hedgerows. Caen was a D-Day objective for the British, but it was not finally cleared of German defenders until July 10.

During the critical first six weeks of battle in Normandy, the Germans fought tenaciously, but without the reserves they needed to make an effective counterattack. Fortunately for the Allies, the German Fifteenth Army during this whole period remained pinned down in the Pas de Calais, northeast of the Seine River, because the German commanders feared that the Allies planned another landing in that area. The Allies were at pains to encourage this miscalculation, and by the time the Germans finally were convinced that the landings were to be confined to Normandy, it was too late to shift the troops necessary to seal off the beachhead.

Here another decisive factor again came into the picture—Allied tactical air superiority. This above everything else limited the troop movements that could be made, once a decision to do so was taken. It was this which had moved Rommel to insist on a static defense at the water line. In his report as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, General Eisenhower had some strong criticisms for Rommel's defensive policy. Eisenhower reported as follows:

Meanwhile, the enemy found himself in a dilemma. He had pinned his faith on Rommel's policy of concentrating upon the beach defenses, and when they failed to prevent the establishment of the Allied beachheads, he lacked any alternative means of combating the threat offered. Rommel's confidence in his mines and concrete was indeed to have disastrous results for the German Army. There being no system of defense in depth, when the beaches were forced the enemy lost the initiative and never subsequently succeeded in regaining it. The hand of von Rundstedt, endeavoring to remedy the errors of his lieutenant, became

apparent after the first 2 or 3 weeks of the campaign, when desperate attempts were made to form a mobile armored striking force in reserve; but it was too late.

But later in the same report, Eisenhower suggested how right Rommel was—right in assuming that the invasion would have to be defeated on the beaches, because Allied air superiority would not permit the movement of strong reserves rapidly enough to make decisive counterattacks. When the Allied troops hit the beaches of Normandy, only two bridges over the Seine below Paris remained intact. By July 20 it was reported that “there were no rail bridges left standing nor any rail line uninterrupted in the area bounded by the Loire River, the Seine River and the Paris-Orléans gap.” It took the German 275th Infantry Division a week to travel the 150 miles from Fougères to the front. Two panzer divisions, shifting from the east, traveled from Poland to France in the same time it took them to move from eastern France to Normandy. Men of a German air force unit left The Hague by train on June 18 and, after a circuitous tour through Holland, Belgium, the Rhineland, and eastern France, were unable to reach the battle area until July 3.

The Normandy beachhead was won at a high cost in blood, but casualties were rather less than had been feared, and considerably less than the United States Army had suffered on a number of earlier occasions. American losses on D-Day totaled approximately 4,700, including about 1,235 killed and the remainder wounded and missing. The two airborne divisions suffered 2,500 of these casualties, and the V Corps, which landed on Omaha Beach suffered about 2,000 killed, wounded, and missing. (Losses of the Union Army at Antietam in the Civil War, on the single day of September 17, 1862, amounted to 12,410—2,108 killed, 9,549 wounded, 753 missing.) In the first eleven days of battle in Normandy, June 6 through June 16, total American casualties rose to 3,282 killed and 12,600 wounded. (Serious as these casualties were, it might be noted again that in *three* days of battle at Gettysburg the Union casualties alone totaled some 23,000—3,072 killed, 14,497 wounded, 5,434 missing, and again in the Meuse-Argonne offensive in World War I, Americans suffered an *average* of over 17,000 casualties a *week* for seven weeks.)

During 1954 all France joined in the celebration of two anniversaries—the fortieth anniversary of the battle of the Marne, and the tenth anniversary of the Liberation. Everywhere posters were to be found calling attention to the celebration. A common poster was one showing the white silhouette of the traditional rooster emblem of France on a background of bright red and blue, and within the white area a church standing on a green meadowland; the caption was: “One country, Two Anniversaries.”

The National Committee of the Two Anniversaries, sponsored by the War Veterans Ministry, issued a folder recalling events of the wars and showing a map of France with the date for the traditional celebration of the liberation of each major city. The folder opened first to a letter from President René Coty, flanked by a small reproduction of the general order for mobilization for August 2, 1914. The president's letter was as follows:

If history is the memory of peoples, as Foch liked to say, the commemoration of their great national hours is imposed by conscience as well as by sentiment. This year bids us to celebrate at the same time the fortieth anniversary of the Battle of the Marne and the tenth anniversary of our Liberation.

It is good that in each town and village of France and the French Union all the citizens, who owe their freedom to the sacrifices of their fathers and brothers, commune in the same fervor. Our thoughts go toward those who, faithful to Joffre's order of the day, "Be killed in place rather than fall back," and toward their juniors who, in the night of oppression, dared, sometimes at the price of martyrdom, to be the advance guard of the victorious Allied Army.

To all those soldiers, to those heroes of liberty, the Nation will express, in the communion of festivals, its recognition and fidelity.

On the other side was a reproduction of a bill containing the message which General Charles de Gaulle broadcast from London in 1940, which began, "France has lost a battle! But France has not lost the war!"

A drawing on the anniversary folder depicts the famous taxicab caravan that rushed reinforcements from Paris to the front in the critical battle of the Marne. Photographs recall outstanding French contributions to victory in World War II, episodes which often have escaped the attention of American accounts of the liberation of France. A picture of July 1940 shows General de Gaulle reviewing Free French forces in London; of the eleven volunteers who can be identified in the photograph, ten were killed later in the battles for liberation. A photograph of August 1940 shows Éboué, the fabulous colored governor of Tchad, in Equatorial Africa, who remained steadfastly loyal to the Free French. Another shows troops of the 1st Free French Division in action at Bir Hakeim, on the Western Desert in the spring of 1942; here 3,600 volunteers of this division, under General Pierre Joseph Koenig, held off the assaults of two German armored divisions for two weeks—"They lost 800 of their men, but Rommel did not get to Suez." Another shows Free French forces of the expeditionary corps which fought in Italy under Marshal Alphonse Pierre Juin. Then there is a picture showing a contingent of the *Maquis* marching through the village of Oyonnax, where they descended from the mountains to display the French tricolor on Armistice Day, 1943. Another shows a crowded invasion beach of Normandy in June 1944, the beginning of the liberation,



in this case a British sector, Gold Beach, near Arromanches-les-Bains. Another picture shows the arrival of General Jacques Leclerc and his 2nd French Armored Division in Paris in August 1944, and another shows troops of the First French Army, under General De Lattre de Tassigny, marching through the snow in Alsace, toward Belfort, during the period December 1944 to January 1945. Then there is a picture of Jean Moulin, founder of the National Council of the Resistance, and leader of the Resistance until his arrest and execution in 1943.

The tenth anniversary of the *debarquement* was the occasion for celebrations throughout Normandy. Sunday, June 6, was Whitsunday, and holiday crowds gathered everywhere for the memorial exercises. Highways were heavy with traffic, and trains were crowded. Some 361,000 Parisians left the capital city by train alone for the holiday.

In towns of Normandy, festivities continued all night, from midnight to five A.M. on that tenth anniversary of the invasion. In the back of the minds of the people now celebrating was a hope and a prayer that their country might never again suffer an invasion nor an occupation nor a liberation.

# 3

## Oradour-sur-Glane

When D-Day broke over Normandy in June 1944, peoples of the area south and west of the Loire could rejoice—first in anticipation of early liberation from Nazi occupation, and secondly in relief that they appeared to be outside the battle zone. Surely they felt the greatest sympathy for countrymen who they knew would be victims of war in Normandy, but they must have sensed some measure of relief in knowing that the Allies had elected to strike at the beaches of Normandy rather than at those of Saintonge or Guyenne. Clearly the routes of Allied attack toward Paris and Germany would pass well to the north. Above all the Allied invasion was likely to draw to the north the German divisions then on occupation duty in southern and central France.

Doubtless the villagers of Oradour-sur-Glane shared those sentiments. The nearest city—Limoges—was about twenty miles away, and with no railways passing through the town, nor any industrial establishments, nor military installations to be found there, Oradour was an unlikely target either for bombing or ground attack.

Yet Oradour was in a region where incidents of violence had not been uncommon. In the months of German occupation the hills of the Massif Central and the surrounding country had become favorite hiding places for the *Maquis*—where Resistance fighters of the French Forces of the Interior, armed with weapons dropped from cooperating British aircraft, posed a constant peril for unwelcome German soldiers. Frustrated in seeking out those armed bands, the Germans had taken to applying retaliatory violence against local civilian populations in the areas where disturbances occurred. Later it was established that the head of the Gestapo headquarters for Central France at Périgueux, Michael Hambrecht, had had a hand in the killing of at least 166 French civilians. Such incidents of

violence had been most common in the departments of Lot, Lot-et-Garonne, Tarn-et-Garonne, Aveyron, Corrèze, Dordogne, and Haute-Vienne. Oradour-sur-Glane was in the department of Haute-Vienne, but it had not been the scene of French Forces of the Interior activity, and thus far had escaped the wrath of the uneasy Germans.

After shifting quickly from the Third U.S. Army back to the First Army in August 1944 to meet the German counteroffensive near Mortain, members of the 35th Division found themselves up against the SS panzer division, *Das Reich*. The Americans knew that this was a part of Hitler's elite, but they were not then aware that *Das Reich* had moved to Normandy from southern France after D-Day, nor were they aware to what extent members of that vaunted SS division already had hands covered with blood.

According to a map found later, *Das Reich Panzer Division* moved into France near the Swiss border, some time after the 1940 armistice. It moved along a route just outside what then was the Unoccupied Zone of France, from Mulhouse to Bordeaux. Later the division moved from Bordeaux into what had been Unoccupied France. In March, April, and May 1944 it was following criss-cross routes across central France from Bordeaux to Valence and from Caussade to Bagnac and Caylus— apparently with a mission to combat the FFI in that region.

D-Day apparently found *Das Reich Division* in Guyenne, north of Cahors. As soon as it became clear to German commanders that the landings in Normandy did in fact constitute the big invasion, they set in motion scattered forces from many parts of occupied countries. *Das Reich* must move quickly toward Normandy to throw its armored forces into the counterattack against the Allies. The route to the north ran through the heart of *Maquis* country. Undoubtedly the prospect of moving through that country, at a time when local hostility was likely to be rising proportionally with the news of Allied landings, ate into the confidence of SS officers and men alike. They were determined to deal vigorously with any opposition; they would make a few examples along the way in order to impress upon the population the horrible consequences of resistance. They began almost at once at the small town of Frayssinet, where they shot a dozen hostages and set fire to several houses.

Such measures did not seem, however, to be having the desired effect. As the columns moved northward, bands of FFI insisted on harassing them. Between forty and fifty German soldiers were killed. What was the answer? To deploy detachments to pursue those irregular French forces into their mountains? Instead, it was to resort to sterner retaliation against the civil population. Elements of the division reaching Tulle on June 9 sought out hostages to impress with greater severity the penalty for resistance. It will be two French-

men for every German killed, the commander decreed. Groups of soldiers dispersed along the main streets of the city with ninety-nine civilian captives. For each hostage the Germans brought out a length of rope, adjusted a noose, and then proceeded to hang all ninety-nine of the men from balconies along the streets where the sight might strike terror into the hearts of all French partisans who might see or hear of the episode.

Their terrible work of retribution in Tulle finished, men of the SS moved on northwestward toward Limoges and Saint-Junien.

Situated in the midst of the good agricultural land west of Limoges and south of Saint-Junien, the people of Oradour-sur-Glane had been able to eat well most of the time during the war years. They were grateful that they had not been touched by the bloodshed and destruction of bombing or invasion. This did not mean that they were unaware of the war still going on for the liberation of their country. Indeed, the town's population of about 1,600 people had been nearly doubled by the influx of refugees from Lorraine and other areas overrun in the early German drives of 1940. Even exiles of Republican Spain had taken refuge here.

Oradour was an old village. Its name, from the Latin *oratorium*, suggested that it had been an oratory, the site of an altar and place for prayers for the dead in the days when Gaul still was a Roman province. The village of 1944 had the characteristics of hundreds of French farm villages. The old, sturdy church dominated one end of the village, and tile-roofed, stucco houses and shops and barns spread along the main street. A triangle formed by two side streets which converged toward the cemetery constituted the heart of the town. Here stood a cluster of big houses, shops, and other buildings. The second of these streets joined the main street at a broad open area, the marketplace, known as the Champ de Foire. Nearer the other end of the town a third side street angled off in the opposite direction. A tramway line running through the center of the town provided connections with the city of Limoges. Three schools were operating in the town—the boys' school with 64 pupils; the girls' school with 106 pupils, and a special school which had been established for the children of refugees from Alsace and Lorraine, with 21 pupils.

Saturday, June 10, 1944, began as an ordinary day of work and rest for inhabitants and visitors in Oradour-sur-Glane. A light mist fell during most of the morning, but before noon the sky began to clear. A number of the farmers were working in the fields, but others joined the lines in town for the tobacco distribution scheduled for that day. Travelers seeking a quiet weekend in the country joined with refugees to fill the two hotels to capacity. Most of the school children were at school for a medical examination. At noon shop-

keepers closed their doors, and farmers came in from the fields for their customary two-hour lunch period.

Among the guests gathering for their noon meal at the Hotel Avril were a woman with her three children and a little niece who had come here to escape the danger of bombardment in Paris; a family from Bordeaux, father and two children; a veterinary officer from Reims with his wife and nephew; an old lady from Rennes; a woman and her mother from Montpellier; a family from Limoges; a couple of Jewish families hiding under assumed names in order to escape Nazi persecution. People coming in for lunch at the Hotel Milford included several families from Paris, a young woman who had come to arrange for moving her silver and other precious things away from the war zone, some visitors from Limoges, from Marseilles, and elsewhere. Several of the hotel guests had arrived only the day before. Two young school teachers, one from Oradour and the other from a neighboring village, ate early in order to get back to their classes.

Just after two P.M., farmers were returning to their fields, shops were reopening, school children were back at their schools, and the streets were filling with shoppers. Suddenly a hush fell over the street, and one could sense anxiety spreading among the people as they glanced down the street toward the church. A convoy of German trucks and half-tracks was moving in from the direction of Limoges. It was the 3rd company of Der Fuhrer Regiment of the SS panzer division Das Reich.

The vehicles halted between the church and the center of town. The soldiers dismounted, and methodically began going about their assigned tasks. The commander ordered all the people to assemble at the marketplace—Champ de Foire—to have their identification papers checked. Interpreters, speaking perfect French, relayed the order through the village. Detachments of soldiers went to all the houses to make sure that all the people—old and young, sick and well—were assembled as directed. Mothers came pushing small children in perambulators and carrying crying babies in their arms. A school teacher who had been at home ill arrived wearing a coat over her pajamas. The village baker came covered with flour. Two soldiers rapped impatiently at the door of Father Lorch, and when he appeared they quickly seized him, and without even giving him time to put on his hat, they marched him to the Champ de Foire to join the others.

Meanwhile other detachments went to the schools to summon the children. Some of the children were told that they were to get candy; some that they were to assemble to have pictures taken; others that they were to be taken to the church for safety. But one little fellow from Lorraine sensed danger. He said to some of his young classmates, "these are Germans; I know them; they intend to do us harm; I am going to try to save myself." With that he slipped out through

the garden behind the school, made his way through the dense hay in the field, and disappeared into the woods beyond. But the others marched quietly behind their teachers, led by the soldiers, to join their elders in the center of the town.

Half-tracks and trucks were dispatched to the fields to bring in the farmers still working there. Some trucks even brought people from neighboring villages. Soldiers were posted along the hedges outside the town to keep people from escaping. Soldiers armed with machine guns and rifles surrounded Champ de Foire to cover the people gathering there. Apprehension was rising among the villagers.

Practically all the population and visitors in Oradour had been assembled by about 2:45 P.M. There were a few exceptions. A few individuals, sensing possible danger, had been able to elude the Germans and hide in the gardens or fields and then go on to the woods. One father, with his wife and two children, had held back, had been found and forced into the street, and still had escaped through a back garden. Several inhabitants—perhaps twenty or so—were known to be working or visiting in neighboring towns, or were at Limoges or elsewhere. But those assembled in the Champ de Foire probably numbered between six hundred and a thousand—possibly more. Most of them were becoming more anxious by the minute—wondering if the Germans would demand more of them than to see their identification papers.

The German captain sought out the mayor, seventy-two-year-old Dr. Jean Desourteaux, lifelong resident of Oradour, and said to him, "You are going to designate for me thirty hostages." The doctor replied quietly that he could not accede to such a demand. He was taken to the town hall for a few minutes, and then returned to the assembly place, where he was heard telling the German officer that he, the mayor, would designate himself as a hostage, and if any others were needed, they only had to arrest his family. German soldiers, with light machine guns, moved in close to the crowd. They made it clear that anyone attempting to leave would be struck down. Another tense fifteen minutes passed. It was about three P.M.

Now the Germans divided the people into two groups: the men on one side, the women and children on the other. They formed the men into three ranks along one side of the open area, and commanded them to face the wall. Then they marched the women and children off toward the church. The men could permit themselves to hope that their women and children would be safe. But what fate awaited themselves? Would the Germans take thirty of them as hostages?

Soon an interpreter, speaking in good French, explained, "There are here some secret depots of arms and munitions for the terrorists. We are going to make a search. In order to facilitate operations we

are going to assemble you in the barns. If you know of any of these depots we urge you to make them known to us."

One Frenchman volunteered feebly, "I have a six-millimeter carbine; this caliber is authorized by the Prefecture."

"It does not interest us," the German soldier answered.

Actually there were no secret caches of weapons and ammunition in Oradour-sur-Glane, so far as is known. In fact, the local inhabitants had gone about their work quietly and peaceably with no apparent violations of occupation regulations. Nevertheless, the Germans proceeded with their plans. They divided the men into half a dozen groups of thirty or forty men each, and led the groups at gunpoint to as many barns and garages at various points in the village.

One group stopped at the Laudy barn, just around the corner from the Champ de Foire. In this group were several farmers, a garageman, the village wheelwright, the barber, and others. Groups of soldiers armed with light machine guns stood guard at the doors. They talked and laughed excitedly while the men inside grimly waited to see what was to happen. Then suddenly, and apparently on a prearranged signal from the Champ de Foire, the Germans opened fire on the group of helpless men in the barn. This was no search for hidden weapons, nor were the Germans designating a few hostages. All the men here were marked for destruction! Simultaneously other soldiers were firing into the groups of men herded in five other barns and garages of the village. Almost immediately the floors were heaped with bleeding bodies. Several still lived. But those who tried to get up received the *coup de grâce* from a pistol.

In the Laudy barn a few wounded men lay still until the Germans had gone outside. Those who could tried to pull themselves out from beneath the heavy bodies which pinned them to the floor. One man said that he had two broken legs. He called for his wife and children. He could not move. The doors opened. Germans came back in and covered the bodies with hay, straw, firewood, wood from broken carts, and anything else that would burn, and set fire to it. As smoke filled the room, and flames crept close all around, those who could move made desperate efforts to drag themselves out. One man, the garageman, was determined to escape at once. He was able to get out the door, and then he ran for the cemetery. Immediately a German machine gun cut him down, and he fell violently through a wooden picket fence—dead. At last five men, wounded in arms or legs or shoulder by bullets, singed by fire, and lungs burning with smoke, were able to make their way, one by one, through a hole in the wall and into an adjacent hay loft. The man with the two broken legs, and others too badly wounded to move, though still living, had to resign themselves to a fate of being burned alive.

In the hayloft the five more fortunate men covered themselves with hay and beans or got behind stacks of wood, and waited. But soon a German soldier came in there too, and set fire to the hay. Even as the flames licked at the boots of one and burned the hair of another, they remained motionless until they were sure that the German had left. Again fleeing from the fire, they found another way out, and got into a rabbit shed, where they burrowed into the ground floor, and again covered themselves with sticks and debris. Again the fire pursued them. After burning embers had begun to fall upon them they found another refuge in a narrow passageway between two walls. But they could not remain here indefinitely.

Finally, about seven P.M., they made their way outside the buildings. No Germans were in sight. The whole town now was in flames. The heavy smoke screened the movements of the five men as they crept cautiously toward the Champ de Foire. They looked up and down, and seeing no one, they ran, as best they could, toward the cemetery. At last they were safe. They embraced in joy that they had escaped. They spent the night in the nearby fields and hedges, and the next day found friends. They were the only men who had lived to tell the tale.

In the meantime other soldiers had been looking after the women and children in the church. Fears already gripping the mothers and wives and sisters and children were redoubled when they heard the machine-gun fire in the streets. Some of the women were sobbing. A few fainted. Many of the school children and babies were crying. About four o'clock some young soldiers entered the church, and placed a big case or shell in the nave, near the choir. Cords running out from the shell soon were lighted, and then came a loud explosion. Black smoke poured out. Terror-stricken women and children crowded together as they sought some corner for fresh air. They surged against the door of the sacristy and their weight forced it open. Half-suffocated beings poured in to seek another gasp of air. But the alert Germans were not to allow it. With complete ruthlessness they opened fire from outside. Then came a re-enactment, on a bigger and more hideous scale, of the procedures used in the barns. Straw and broken chairs and sticks of wood were scattered over the people who had fallen, and a fire started. Clearly all the women, and all the children too, like the men in the barns, were marked for extermination!

Fire and bullets soon ended the terrorized milling about in the church. Some babies died in their carriages, some in their mothers' arms, some lost from everyone. Grenades hurled among the babies killed some of them quickly. For others, death came only as the smoke and flames spread over their tortured bodies. Two school children crept into the confessionals, and there died. Cries of people caught in that hellfire could be heard as far as two kilometers away.



Outside, German soldiers heard the shrieks and groans passively, it seemed; but at least some of the soldiers not yet completely Nazi-fied were haunted the rest of their lives, whether long or short, by the cries of anguish over which they presided.

Among the women was Mme. Simon Rouffanche, forty-six-year-old wife of one of the farmers of the village. She had seen her husband and her eighteen-year-old son taken with the men in the Champ de Foire. Two daughters, twenty-four and twenty-two years old, and a six-month-old-baby boy had accompanied her to the church. In the confusion these all had become separated. Hope gone, Mme. Rouffanche had sat for a moment on a stairway, where one of her daughters had found her. There a burst of machine-gun bullets killed her daughter. Mme. Rouffanche decided to feign death for a few moments. Then taking advantage of the heavy cloud of smoke filling the rooms, she crawled behind the big altar. Beside the altar were three high windows, and here she saw one last ray of hope. She found a stool—one used to light the tapers—and with it climbed up to where she could reach the large center window. By a super-human effort she pulled herself up through the window, and dropped to the ground ten feet below. Looking back she noticed that another woman had followed her up to the window with a baby. The woman handed down the baby to Mme. Rouffanche, and then dropped down beside her. But the baby was crying, and this attracted the attention of the Germans. Inevitably a machine gun opened up. The second woman and the baby were killed at once. Mme. Rouffanche was painfully wounded, but she made it to a nearby garden, where she remained hidden among rows of peas. There she lay in pain all night, and all the next day until five P.M. when at last some men searching for survivors rescued her. She was the only person among the hundreds of women and children herded into the church who escaped with her life.

Other unfortunates unwarily walked into the death trap of Oradour. When the population was being assembled on the Champ de Foire, a group of six or seven young bicyclists from another town had arrived. Here their tour ended. They were directed to park their bicycles and join the groups marching to their death. Bursts of fire in Oradour frightened mothers in neighboring villages who had children in the schools at Oradour. Some of them hurried into the condemned town to try to bring their children home. And in doing so they joined them in death—those who arrived early, in the church; others by machine gun on the spot. A woman returning from a trip was warned by friends on the way not to return to the town. But her husband and children were in danger. She shared their fate. Some women who entered the town as the massacre was going on were put into one of the barns to die with the men. One of the men had taken refuge with a friend in the neighboring village of Bordes.

About seven P.M. he noticed that the firing had almost subsided, and said that he believed he would go back into town. "My papers are in order," he said. "I am risking nothing." Waving a white handkerchief, he walked toward Oradour. He reached the top of a slight elevation in the road. There a burst of machine-gun fire met him, and he died instantly.

Their work of death virtually completed, the SS men proceeded to a systematic looting of the town, and made sure that no buildings escaped the fire. Some of them made feeble attempts to bury some of the bodies in shallow graves in the gardens. Some, perhaps shameful or frightened, hid a few of the battered bodies of babies. But most of the bodies, burned beyond recognition, remained in the ruins of the barns and the church.

How many people died in Oradour-sur-Glane on that tragic day? No one can know with certainty. Only 52 of the bodies could be identified. On the basis of the other remains found, on information given by friends and relatives of persons known to be in Oradour at the time, and on the testimony of the few witnesses who survived and who remembered seeing certain persons in the assembled groups, the courts officially declared dead another 590 persons, or a total of 642—190 men, 245 women, 207 children. Many local inhabitants insist that the actual death toll was much higher than that—that doubtless many refugees and passersby were there who had no friends or relatives outside who knew that they were there.

Only grotesque walls of gutted buildings and smouldering ruins remained of the town itself. All its buildings were destroyed—the church, the tramway station, the hotels, 123 houses, 26 workshops, 19 garages, 35 coach houses, 40 barns, 58 sheds, 22 stores, 4 schools.

Satisfied with their efficiency, the SS leaders ordered their men back into their trucks and half-tracks. Between eight and ten o'clock that evening they rolled bravely into the town of Nieul to spend the night before the next leg of their move to Normandy. The trucks were filled with loot. Some of the soldiers were singing wildly to the accompaniment of an accordion. They feasted on chickens, rabbits, pigeons, and wine which they had taken from Oradour or other places along the way, and many of them celebrated all through the night with festive eating and drinking.

Why? The inevitable question of tragedy persists. Why was this done? Supposedly the Germans had taken this drastic step to retaliate against activities of the FFI which menaced their movements. Now it is true that customary international law grants that an occupying army may take drastic action against guerrilla fighters—but only against the fighters. There is no place in international law for group punishment for acts of individuals. Certainly no law or custom could find any kind of justification for the kind of barbaric treatment accorded Oradour-sur-Glane. There was some indication

that Oradour-sur-Glane was the victim of a terrible mistake—that actually the Germans had intended to destroy Oradour-sur-Vayres, a town fifteen miles away where Resistance fighters had killed some Germans. But the crime would have been as great in one Oradour as the other. Some hold to the theory that the SS unit had lost its leader to Resistance fighters elsewhere, and its new leaders were determined to wreak vengeance on a village chosen at random on or near their route of march.

It seems likely that there was yet another consideration which induced SS leaders to this deed—the morale of their troops. At any rate a report of the 19th SS Regiment a week later stated that the commencement of reprisal measures had had a favorable influence on troop morale. Possibly this was their crude way of reassuring men whose confidence was being eaten away by fear of ambush as they moved through the country of the *Maquis* to meet the great Allied invasion in Normandy. If the purpose was to cow the French population, it had quite the opposite effect in raising up a bitter determination to fight ceaselessly until the Germans had been expelled from their soil.

Germans themselves were shocked and indignant about what had happened when they heard about it. It was reported that Field Marshal Rommel, then commander of Germany's defenses in France, wrote an outraged letter to Hitler demanding punishment of Das Reich Division. Later a German general paid a visit of homage to the ruins of Oradour. But for many Frenchmen the bitterness would not die with the embers; it would burn in their hearts for a generation. And the survivors and the families of the victims took steps to make sure that the massacre of Oradour-sur-Glane would not be forgotten.

Relatives formed a National Association of the Families of the Martyrs of Oradour-sur-Glane. They led a movement which resulted in having Oradour set aside as a national monument. The ruins would be left as the Germans had left them—a grim reminder to all who might visit in the years to come that "the Huns passed this way in June 1944." In 1945 General de Gaulle, then head of the Provisional Government of France, visited the town and placed a bronze plaque in the wooden chapel which had been built by the cemetery. The inscription: "To Oradour, witness of German barbarity, from the Government of the Republic."

A new Oradour-sur-Glane would be built on a completely new site, on a knoll just beyond the western limits of the old town.

While the new buildings were being constructed, surviving members of some twenty-five families—including those who were away on the day of the massacre as well as the six who lived through it and the few others who had hidden and avoided the assembly of the population—these survivors lived in a temporary wooden barrack

a short distance from the cemetery. Mme. Rouffanche—the woman who had escaped from the church—lived for five years in the barrack before she moved into her new house in the new town in 1951.

Tragedy did not cease for Oradour with the departure of the Germans and the liberation of the country. As was to be expected, vigorous and thoroughgoing researches began immediately in an effort to establish the identity of the persons who had taken part in the massacre. Soon evidence established the fact that some of those involved in the affair actually were compatriots of the victims—those men who had served so expertly as interpreters had been Frenchmen, Alsatians who had been drafted into the German army after Hitler's 1940 annexation of Alsace. Feelings of incredulity and bitterness swept Frenchmen who knew of Oradour—such barbarity might be expected from the Boche, but to think that men considered Frenchmen should take part!

How many Alsatian Frenchmen were involved—or how many Germans, for that matter—never was established. None of the responsible officers ever was apprehended. Unquestionably many of the members of the guilty company had been killed, for Das Reich Division suffered very heavy casualties. A number of the Alsatians deserted after the unit got involved in combat. After the end of hostilities in 1945 the French government was able to find and arrest twenty-one enlisted soldiers—seven Germans and fourteen Alsatians—who had been at Oradour. The search continued, but months and then years passed while the arrested men remained in jail awaiting trial.

Finally in January 1953—eight years and seven months after the crime—the twenty-one accused went on trial before a military tribunal at Bordeaux. Now the revelations again of the massacre of Oradour rekindled bitterness and animosity as the five men who had escaped from the barn and the woman who had escaped from the church retold their stories. Americans anxious for ratification of the European Defense Community to meet new threats of aggression in 1953 reported, "Memories of German militarism are being resharpened at a time when France is torn over the question of ratifying EDC."

Sensing the tense situation, impatient with the long delays, and determined that justice should be done, the presiding judge, Marcel Nussy-Saint-Saëns, said at the opening of the trial:

I call to your attention that Lenz [a German sergeant] has been held since August 12, 1945, and that is scandalous. This is the consequence of all the delays, all the hesitation that has been shown in this trial. I must protest publicly against such dilatory tactics.

It would require the voice of a prophet to describe the dossier that I am obliged to open. Before this hecatomb, one finds oneself murmuring, "Why this massacre? Why these dead? Why this carnage?"

One answer dominates these proceedings, and I ask that all of you remember it during this trial: It is because beings having lost all touch with human dignity had tried to establish by constraint the rule of material force alone. The martyrs of Oradour died to bear witness to the primacy of the spiritual, and of the respect due man.

The judge reminded those in the courtroom that Germans of conscience also had been indignant on learning of the massacre at Oradour.

Emotion-packed controversy began almost at once as attorneys for the Alsations asked that they be tried separately from the Germans. By a law of September 1948, the French parliament had adopted a rule of collective guilt for such cases—if a military unit were guilty of a war crime, then all the members present in that unit were guilty. The defense insisted that to apply this rule to the Alsations would in effect recognize retroactively the legality of the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine by Germany in 1940. It maintained that Alsations forced into the German army against their will deserved separate treatment. At first the court refused the plea, but later agreed that the judgment of the Alsations should be separate from that of the Germans.

The attorney for the families of the victims demanded the death penalty for all twenty-one defendants. He said that the fourteen Alsations were as guilty as the others. Showing considerably greater moderation, the prosecution asked the death penalty for only one Alsatian, Sergeant Georges Boos, who had volunteered for the German army, and hard labor or imprisonment for his thirteen Alsatian co-defendants who had been conscripted into the German forces. While recognizing that these men had been drafted against their wills, the prosecutor urged that they not go unpunished.

"If Hitler disposed of their bodies, did he dispose of their wills?" he asked. No one should forget the pressure that had been put on these men, he agreed, but he pointed out that these thirteen Frenchmen had been stationed in France (ordinarily the Germans were careful to station conscripts of doubtful loyalty on a war front far from their own homelands), and he suggested that if they had wanted to they could have deserted—as most of them did in the Normandy campaign, when they were up against fire and steel. The prosecutor conceded that forced recruitment was an important extenuating circumstance, but he said that this was no excuse for men "who are guilty of having participated in crimes against the French people, against their own brothers." Of course it might also have been pointed out that most of the Germans were conscripts too, as far as that went.

The defense said that the Alsatian who had volunteered was only seventeen-and-a-half years old at the time, and he had done so, not to commit a crime at Oradour, but to be a soldier. Of the others,

defense attorneys went on to say that desertion would have brought immediate reprisals against their families in Alsace. As for refusing to obey orders, it was pointed out that in Italy the Germans had hanged two Alsatians merely for raising an objection to an order. In summation for the Alsatians, the defense emphasized the youth of the men at the time of the affair, the fact that they had been forced into the SS, the need to prove intent to commit a crime since the rule of collective responsibility no longer applied, and the fact that the men really responsible for the crime were not in the court at all. The father of one of these Alsatian boys himself had been forcibly inducted into the German army in 1914, and had deserted. Thirty years later his son had been forcibly inducted, and was only eighteen years old at the time of the massacre. What would have happened to the parents, asked the defense attorney, if this boy had deserted?

In their final statements most of the Germans denied having any personal part in the massacre, and they expressed confidence that the court would give them fair treatment. One of them explained that he was only seventeen years old at the time, that he had been obliged to obey orders, and that it had been very painful to him to fire for the first time against human beings; he said that thoughts of the innocent victims troubled him ceaselessly.

After deliberating for thirty-two hours, the court on February 13, 1953, gave its verdict. One German was acquitted. One German, Karl Lenz, and the Alsatian who had volunteered and become a sergeant, Georges René Boos, were sentenced to death. Four of the Germans were sentenced to varying terms of hard labor, and one was sentenced to ten years in prison. Of the remaining thirteen Alsatians, nine were sentenced to hard labor for terms of five to eight years, and four received prison sentences ranging from five to eight years. Most of the simple prison terms were canceled out by the time already served while awaiting the trial.

The verdict against the Alsatians set off a wave of indignation throughout Alsace. People there considered the decision unfair to boys who had been forced to join Hitler's forces, and an insult to the loyalty of the whole province. Church bells of Alsace rang out that night in protest. The next day all the parliamentary deputies (excepting the lone Communist) of the two Alsatian departments of Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin unanimously adopted a resolution saying that the Alsatian deputies "protest solemnly against the Bordeaux judgment, which imposes a criminal conviction on victims of forcible enlistment, and which impugns the honor of Alsace. They unanimously demand the immediate suspension of the penalties imposed on forcibly enlisted Frenchmen; and they resolve to constitute themselves as a nonparty parliamentary group with the object of energetic common action until they are rehabilitated."

The same day the mayors of the towns and cities of Bas-Rhin met at the city hall in Strasbourg, and mayors of Haut-Rhin held a similar meeting at Colmar. The mayors, too, adopted strong motions of protest. They said that the cause of the Alsatians' involvement went back to the abandonment of Alsace in 1940 after a military defeat of which that historic frontier province was the first and most pitiable victim, just as it had been the ransom of the war of 1870. Public opinion should realize, the Strasbourg resolution said, that Alsace, after being found faithful in two great national trials, resents as an undeserved affront the sight of thirteen forcibly enlisted Alsatians' expiating crimes for which successive French governments had been unable to obtain the surrender of those truly responsible. The French government should accept its responsibilities, the motion went on, and not leave Alsace, after the abandonment of 1940, to the bitterness of seeing herself abandoned yet again.

The mayors went so far as to set plans for an administrative strike. They called for local authorities in all Alsatian municipalities to break off all relations with the prefectures as representatives of the national government. They would continue to carry out their local responsibilities, but they would act as though the central government in Paris did not exist.

The association of forcibly enrolled men, representing nearly 130,000 men who had served in the German forces, organized meetings and obtained as principal speakers the lawyers who had defended the Alsatians at Bordeaux.

On Sunday afternoon, February 15, the deputies, mayors, and veterans' organizations—including men who had fought in French and Allied armies as well as those who had served with the Germans—organized demonstrations. In Strasbourg a big crowd gathered in Place Broglie, and a long procession filed past the war memorial, now draped in crepe, in the Place de la République. Similar demonstrations were to be found in nearly all the important towns and in many of the villages. Even the Bishop of Strasbourg, speaking in the great cathedral, protested the verdict as an insult to Alsace. The voices of Alsace were raising a cry for annulment of the verdict which the government in Paris did not dare ignore.

Perhaps the gravest threat to national unity was an announcement of the revival of a separate Alsatian political party. Leaders of the association of forcibly enrolled men launched what they called the "Alsatian Popular Movement." They denied that their objective was complete autonomy for Alsace, but they did intend to call for a policy of "regionalism" as against the extreme centralization of government in Paris. Furthermore they demanded a settlement of the language problem on the basis of permitting German to be on the same footing with French in Alsace.

General Charles de Gaulle, staunch nationalist and bitter foe of German rearmament, gave his support to the Alsatian protests. The real criminals, he said, the Germans who had ordered the massacre, had not been judged. Instead of the German leaders being handed over by the Allies, as provided for in agreements, everything had happened as though the crime devolved upon a dozen young Alsations who were at Oradour under the military orders of the oppressors of their country. "What Frenchman will not understand the enraged grief of Alsace?" he asked. What should have been avoided, he continued, was that, having suffered the tragedy of Oradour, France should now permit a bitter injury to national unity.

In the French parliament a move quickly gained momentum to grant amnesty to all Alsations forcibly enlisted in the German forces. Premier René Mayer said that his government was powerless to grant demands for annulment of the Bordeaux verdict, but it would support a general amnesty law for all 130,000 Alsations forcibly drafted into the German units. In a statement before the National Assembly the Premier appealed to the people of Alsace to cease their demonstrations and protests, and to await the outcome of the amnesty proposal. On February 19, 1953, the National Assembly passed the amnesty bill by a vote of 348 to 217. In an obvious attempt to assuage the feelings of survivors and friends of Oradour, the Assembly attached a rider to cite individually each victim of the massacre for honor by the French nation. Senators of the Council of the Republic approved the bill the same day by a vote of 174 to 79, though disapproving the special rider for individual citations to victims. The National Assembly repassed the measure the next day in the form approved by the Council of the Republic.

But to placate one side in this kind of affair was to antagonize the other. While the amnesty bill was under consideration, on February 18, the president of the National Association of the Families of the Martyrs of Oradour sent a letter to all the mayors of France asking them to protest the bill. He said that earlier the Alsatian members of parliament had said that all guilty men, even Alsations, should be punished, but now that the verdict had gone against them they had gone back on their word, and were seeking to overturn the findings of the court by threats. On the day that the amnesty law was passed in its final form, the mayor of Oradour returned to the prefect of Haute-Vienne at Limoges the cross of the Legion of Honor and the scroll of citation which had been presented in 1949, and the bronze plaque which General de Gaulle had presented in 1945. The association of the families of the victims sent a letter to President Vincent Auriol which said: "Our dead are being held in scorn and jeered at. Oradour has been sacrificed a second time. Oradour, the symbol of barbarity, will henceforth be also the symbol of unpunished crime. Nobody in the ranks of our association feels the slightest hate or



feeling of vengeance toward Alsace or the Alsatians. We simply ask for justice—that is the appeal of our dead from the depths of their grave. Their voice has not been heard.”

On February 22 the populations of neighboring towns marched to the ruins of Oradour and placed wreaths in the church as a solemn protest against the amnesty law. In Paris a crowd of several hundred people, made up largely of members of wartime Resistance groups and deportees’ associations, marched to the Arc de Triomphe and placed wreaths inscribed to the victims of the Oradour massacre.

At each entrance to the ruined town of Oradour the association of the families of the victims erected a glass-covered poster listing by name all the deputies and senators who voted for the amnesty law on February 19, and thus “have rehabilitated the SS monsters who assassinated, plundered, and pillaged Oradour-sur-Glane.” A second glass-covered poster gives the name and the alleged crime of each of the thirteen Alsatians who was freed, under the heading: “The 13 monsters below participated in the assassination of 642 inhabitants of Oradour-sur-Glane.” It says that the first one listed was a member of the Hitler Youth Organization, and that he participated in the execution of thirty men. Similar information is given for the other twelve.

Excitement was quieting down in Alsace, on the other hand, as the convicted Alsatians, freed under the amnesty law, returned to their homes. Groups of the association of forcibly enlisted men meeting in Strasbourg and Colmar expressed satisfaction that the release of the prisoners marked the effective rehabilitation of all forcibly drafted men.

The French government meanwhile pushed new efforts to bring to trial those really responsible—those who had ordered the massacre at Oradour. In particular the French sought the extradition from Germany of the man said to have been the commander of Das Reich Panzer Division when members of that division hanged the ninety-nine hostages in Tulle, and when members of that division had massacred the population of Oradour. The man was General Bernhard Lammerding. After the war he had organized a building company in Dusseldorf. Soon after the opening of the Bordeaux trial he had left his home and his job. The West German government refused to sanction a move for extradition on the ground that the federal constitution forbids the extradition of German nationals. The French applied to the British, in whose zone of occupation the former general resided. At first the British resisted, contending that the trial was taking place too long after the offense. Premier Mayer, on a personal visit to London, urged the British government to hasten extradition proceedings. Then the Foreign Office announced on February 19 that it had begun the proceedings. But by this time Lammerding of course had disappeared. He was thought to be in hiding in the American Zone. And it was said that United States of-

ficials were not enthusiastic about turning him over for trial, if found, for their main concern at the moment was to avoid inflaming anti-German feelings in France any further lest the European Defense Community pact be jeopardized. Feeling was strong in Germany, at the same time, against turning the accused general over to the French. Already there had been a flood of criticism in Western Germany against the release of the Alsatians, while Germans, given the same sentences in the same court, were being required to carry out their sentences.

On June 10, 1954, the tenth anniversary of the massacre, survivors and friends and relatives of the victims of Oradour gathered in the old cemetery to dedicate a high stone monument erected over the common grave where the unidentified bones of hundreds of victims had been buried. In front of the monument are two glass-covered caskets containing pieces of human bones where all may see them and be reminded of the horrible death which the victims suffered. Scores of markers and plaques surround the big monument. Many of them, after a common French custom, contain photographs of the persons in whose memory they have been placed. One tablet is to Mme. Lucie Miozzo and her seven children. Another, on a separate grave, is for Mme. Eugénie Brandy, age forty-nine, and her three daughters, aged twenty-five, twenty-one, and four. There is a tablet inscribed "Spanish Republic: Spanish Junta of Liberation—To our martyrs of Oradour," and it lists the names of twenty victims, ranging in age from one and two to seventy-two.

Years afterward, memories of the tragic day in June 1944 remain vivid, and frequent visitors visibly impressed by what they see, make it unlikely that Oradour will be soon forgotten. The ruined town, surrounded by a neat stone wall and attended by guides and caretakers provided by the national government, and always watched over by the association of the families of the victims, has become an attraction for incredulous visitors. Busses going out of Limoges toward Oradour on Sunday afternoon are crowded—always several fishermen are out to try their luck in the waters of the Glane or neighboring streams—but most of the crowd is likely to be made up of French visitors going out to see the ruins of Oradour.

They see the town just as the Germans left it. The walls of ruined buildings, burned-out automobiles still standing where a garage once covered them, twisted bicycle frames on the walls, kitchen utensils scattered about a stove or fireplace, a little girl's burned playthings, and here and there markers in memory of victims with bouquets of flowers under them. A plaque indicates each barn where men were massacred, and others at the ruins of the church tell of the mass execution of the women and the children.

It is a relief for the visitor to enter the new and lively Oradour which has been built to the west of the old town. There every street, shop, house, and barn is completely new—all in light yellow stucco. The new church is a beautiful modernistic building with square lines. Its square bell tower dominates the lower town, and colorful exterior murals stand out in sharp contrast to the background of yellow stucco.

Mme. Rouffanche, the one woman to escape, lived across the street from the new church in a new, attractive house. At fifty-six, Mme. Rouffanche still was an attractive woman of quiet disposition. A sad, though tranquil, countenance suggested only a little of the great tragedy which haunted her memory. That, of course, must dominate the rest of her life, but this does not mean that she has ceased to live her own life.

In 1954 and 1955 European allies and Americans were calling upon the French to take a strong position against new threats of aggression, and in particular to approve a policy which would permit the rearming of Germany under a scheme to organize a European army. But Frenchmen who were acquainted with Oradour, however logical the arguments might be, had great difficulty in accepting German rearmament under any scheme. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in Germany and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in the United States tried to impress upon the French the gravity of the situation. Yes, they said, the Nazi regime under Hitler was very bad, but now, they insisted, the Communists in Russia are ever so much worse. Frenchmen remained unimpressed. What could be worse than Oradour-sur-Glane?



PART TWO

SAINT LÔ:  
ITS DEATH AND  
RESURRECTION



## 4

### The Bombing of Saint-Lô<sup>^</sup>

On the banks of the Vire, between the Torteron and the Dollée, on its acropolis, to the medieval walls, the capital of Manche displayed its monuments. . . .

In its neat and bright streets, its inhabitants led a peaceful, calm, and leisurely life of provincial happiness. . . . And all around it, in rich meadows clinging to the low, rolling hills, milk cows grazed; and in the fair, blue days of fresh springtime, the perfumed snow of apple blossoms fell.

The war passed there!

Of the little city of 11,000 souls reflecting in the clear waters of the Vire, nothing remains.

Everywhere craters, ruins, blackened stones. . . .

Only a little while ago, gay, abundant life, singing, laughter. . . .

Today silence, tears.

Death. . . .

—Manche 1945

More than a decade after the furies of World War II swept beyond Saint-Lô to the south and east, this old Norman town carried on in the midst of its struggle for revival. Even as men spoke of rearmament and threats of new wars, citizens of Saint-Lô bent their efforts toward mending broken hearts and restoring crumbled buildings in the hope of recapturing something of that tranquil life which they had learned to love in earlier years. Impressive results rewarded those efforts; but the work of reconstruction had a long way to go.

After ten years, a row of attractive new apartment houses stood, like a few gold fillings in a mouth full of cavities, along the edge of the Place du Champs de Mars; but people continued to live in one-story prefabricated barracks or huts, and some families still lived in the caves below the ruined church of Notre Dame. Bright new shops were open for business on the first floor of the new

apartment buildings, but a number of the shops, stores, and business offices, like the dwellings, were in one-story temporary buildings of wood or masonry. The whole city had taken on something of the appearance of a temporary military post, or a temporary town around a big dam-building project. Here the work of construction went on at every side, every day. Temporary housing had to be found not only for all the families whose homes had been destroyed, but also for the hundreds of construction workers who had come in from Paris and other cities.

A traveler seeking a room for the night might yet find one at the Hôtel de la Gare or the Hôtel de l'Universe—just as before the war—except now his room would be in a one-story, wooden, prefabricated barrack. But now one also could find an excellent modern room in a new hotel near the center of the city.

Children already in high school could remember their city only in ruins. Young people now out of high school retained the vivid memories of the terror of its destruction. So incongruous, so grotesque, so fantastic—a few minutes, two decades ago, have had enduring effects for so many years. What happened? What turned this peaceful city, set in the midst of farming country, into a charred and broken ruin? What attraction did this picturesque city hold for the god of war?

Excitement was running high in Saint-Lô by eight P.M. on that June 6 in 1944. Already it had become clear that Allied armies had landed on the beaches of Normandy, and the people could look forward now with real hope for early liberation from German occupation. But surely more prominent in the discussions of people of Saint-Lô as they sat about their dinner tables that evening was the air raid which had struck the city at 4:30 that afternoon. American fighter-bombers had attacked the railroad and power stations—without very much damage to either. Though some might have wondered if the planes would not return to complete the destruction of those objectives, others hoped that the early arrival of the liberating armies would make even such further pinpoint bombing unnecessary. The Germans had nearly all left, so that now no apparent reason for bombing remained.

At eight P.M. that evening the deputy mayor of Saint-Lô, Georges Lavalley, late for dinner, was hurrying along the street from the city hall. The roar of aircraft engines drew his attention skyward where he saw fourteen American Flying Fortresses overhead. Then, to his dismay, they began dropping their bombs. Gone were any efforts at pinpoint bombing of specific installations; now the bombs seemed to be falling completely at random. It seemed that the whole city was marked for destruction. But the deputy mayor had little time to ponder these considerations. Very soon he found himself in



the midst of a bomb pattern. Deafening explosions and streaks of flame seemed to bring the whole world falling about his head. Before he could move to take shelter, he was hurled among broken stone and collapsing walls into complete darkness. Miraculously he had escaped serious injury, but he found himself trapped in what he thought was a deep cellar. Shortly afterward another tremendous bomb explosion blew the rubble away, and freed him. To his surprise, he discovered that he had been hurled to the *upper* story of a nearby house, where the debris which fell over him had cut off the light so completely (in Saint-Lô it is still quite light at eight P.M. in June) that he had imagined himself in some underground cave.

A local journalist recalls that about five o'clock on the afternoon of that sixth of June a little girl by the name of Fabre, the youngest child of the organist at the Notre Dame church, stopped him on the street. "What are you going to do?" she had asked. "What do you advise? Is it necessary to leave?"

"It is very difficult to give any advice," he had answered as he thought how the girl's questions must have reflected the indecision that she had heard at home. "If you leave, where will you go? Perhaps there will be some danger everywhere. As for us, we are not going to leave."

A few hours later the little girl and all her family, seeking protection in a basement, were burned beyond recognition.

Shortly after the air attack struck at eight o'clock, the newsman answered his door to find the little girl of a woman who worked for them. The child was frightened and crying. She managed to say, "The house has fallen. Momma sent me to get you. Little brother Jacques and Simone are underneath."

Several men joined in the search among the rubble. They worked rapidly and carefully, stone by stone, as night fell. They found some broken toys, then an empty, crushed crib. Holding out little hope of finding the children still alive, they worked on. Someone shouted that he had felt a foot. It was little Simone—covered with blood. She cried out softly as they put her gently on a blanket. Now they redoubled their efforts to find Jacques. Darkness was complete now, but the men could see by the light of nearby fires. Once again they heard a little cry, and then a call "Mamma!" Jacques wanted to know what had happened; then he wanted to be let alone so that he could go back to sleep. They wanted to hurry with the children to the hospital. But Simone was already dead.

Unlike the light raid in the afternoon, this attack by heavy bombers had brought serious casualties and destruction. Most of the bombs had fallen in the center and the south of the city, and fires continued to spread the destruction long after the bombers had departed. Some enterprising photographer caught a picture of that scene which, in its way, is as awe-inspiring as the well-known

picture of St. Paul's in London standing in the midst of the burning city after the German raid there. In this photo, half-destroyed houses and debris-filled streets appear in the foreground, while in the background is the dim silhouette of the two towers of the church of Notre Dame standing tall and defiant amidst the flame and smoke of burning ruins. But unhappily, neither Notre Dame nor any other edifice was to survive.

The most terrifying raid of all struck between midnight and one A.M. Cries of the terror-stricken and of the dying were all but drowned out in the thunderous reverberations of bombs and the crackling of high flames. Hundreds sought refuge in the big tunnel which the Germans had been excavating in the rock of L'Enclos (the "acropolis"); others hurried to their cellars, or crawled helplessly beneath tables. As often seems the case in a big catastrophe, death followed no regular pattern. A little girl cried in terror in the very center of the devastation, and then found that though the house was destroyed, all her family had been spared. Further away, a furniture merchant found two of his family dead. In the suburb of Saint Georges-Montcocq, on the hill at the northern edge of the city, all nine members of the LeBrun family perished; and old Father Georges Garnot, who had been the parish priest for forty-four years, was killed. In the prison, the Germans kept locked up nearly two hundred patriots whom they had arrested during the preceding months; when a series of bombs struck the building at 1:15 A.M., seventy-six of them died beneath the heavy stone.

M. Delaunay, later educational inspector for this district, reacted quickly when he heard the news of the D-Day landings on Omaha Beach. A war veteran himself, he thought immediately that it probably would be wise to dig a trench in his garden. He spent the morning doing this. When the first heavy bombing raid came at eight P.M., he and his wife and their eight-year-old daughter took refuge in the trench. The bombs did not fall close to them, and with some relief they thought that the danger had passed. Then came the big midnight raid. Again the three huddled in the trench as fire and confusion burst all over the city. This time a bomb plunged directly into their house, and the explosion which followed left it in total destruction. (One piece of furniture was saved from the house—a glass-door bookcase, with a bomb fragment lodged in its doors, which now rests in M. Delaunay's study.) Stone fragments and dirt fell all about the Delaunays as they waited out the raid in their trench. One bomb came down almost beside them, but it fell into a small creek so that they were protected from the blast. After half an hour of this, the airplanes went away. The Delaunays got up and started walking to the south. They were at a relatively safe distance when the next raid came.

One twelve-year-old boy happened to visit some friends on that fateful evening. When he returned to his home he found the house in ruins. Every other member of his family had been killed. In the afternoon one man had remarked that whatever happened he wanted to remain in his home; that night his house was hit, and he and all his family were killed.

In a house not far from the Delaunays' a fifteen-year-old school girl, Jacqueline Lecaplain, was at home with her mother and father when the eight o'clock air raid came. Bombs seemed to be falling all about. One hit the house directly across the street. None hit her own house, but the concussion of those falling nearby blew out all the windows and hurled the furniture about on the floor. After that tempest of bombs, Jacqueline was too shaken and too frightened to go to sleep until about midnight when exhaustion overtook her. About the same time her mother stepped outside to listen. Since the news of the invasion early in the morning everyone was expecting liberation momentarily, and some thought that the air attack was the prelude to the coming of Allied ground forces. At least they hoped that was the case—not only would the arrival of Allied soldiers mean the end of German occupation, more important just now was the consideration that it would also mean the end of Allied air attacks. Hearing the sounds of motors in the distance, Mme. Lecaplain rushed back into the house to report excitedly, "The English tanks are coming!" (Apparently, here, as at Saint-Mère Église, it had not occurred to anyone that the Americans might be coming this way.) But a few minutes later the roar of heavy aircraft grew overhead, to be drowned out almost immediately by the thunderous explosions of another terrible bombardment.

Again the Lecaplain house escaped a direct hit, but again the bombs fell all around it, more furiously than before. Soon the interior of the house was completely wrecked, and some gasoline which the Germans had left in the attic began to burn.

Jacqueline thought that her parents were dead beneath the piles of furniture and plaster. In times of great danger one seems often to feel a natural impulse to run. Perhaps this is a reaction against the complete helplessness of action. Jacqueline ran out of the house. Other people were running by, and she ran after them. As each near bomb came screeching down she would fall flat on the ground to await its verdict—and then run on until the next second of final judgment. Bright flashes lit up the field. Several times close bombs sent stones and dirt flying over her.

After a few minutes Jacqueline came upon a man and woman who were nearly frantic about their eighteen-year-old son. He had become separated from them, and they were afraid that he had been caught by one of the bombs. Soon a priest came hurrying up. He said that the boy was lying in another field badly injured; the priest

was afraid that the boy was dying, and he wanted to find the parents. Jacqueline directed him to them. The parents were nearly overcome when they heard the news. They could not bear to go and find the crumpled body of their son. Then two days later the boy was found—still alive. He was given medical treatment for about three weeks, and then the doctor decided that a delicate brain operation would be necessary in order to save his life. But after the operation the boy went mad. Later he died.

Again, as people fled through the fields at the south edge of Saint-Lô on that fateful night some of them heard wild screams coming from near one of the hedgerows. At first they thought that it was a dying animal, but they went to look just to make sure. They found a woman pinned beneath a big fallen tree; she was giving birth to a child. Several people rushed away to look for a doctor, while others tried to move the tree. In this case a doctor arrived in time to save her.

Some people, including some of the local school teachers, disappeared that night without a trace. Some may have been the victims of direct bomb hits. Some may have been buried beneath so many tons of rubble that they never were found. It is possible that some were dazed and suffered loss of memory, and wandered off—still to live.

At the height of the attack, bombs rained down at the rate of one a second for a period of twenty minutes. When these minutes which seemed an eternity at last passed, scores of trapped persons could be heard crying out in the night. But before rescue work could more than begin, more bombers arrived to feed the holocaust. Hundreds of bombers returned at three o'clock, and again at five o'clock to spread their ruin and death.

By dawn Saint-Lô was a hell of fire and brimstone. Where the day before had stood the prefecture, the city hall, churches, houses, shops, the prison, the Palace of Justice, the medieval ramparts, the hospitals, schools, the municipal theater, hotels, and all the rest, now there was nothing but craters and rubble and smoke. Streets could not be recognized. Only the towers of Notre Dame still stood, but those, too, were to succumb in the succeeding day of warfare.

Survivors who could sought refuge in the hedgerows and sunken roads of the countryside that day. The Nazis permitted more than a thousand to remain in the tunnel for three days. For nearly two years the Germans had been working on this underground network with the apparent purpose of constructing an elaborate underground hospital. Now people eagerly sought its protection. A local surgeon performed urgent operations for seriously injured survivors there; a druggist organized the distribution of what food could be salvaged from the National Relief stores nearby and from the warehouses; a plucky baker continued to make bread, and a courageous milk-

man brought in milk. After three days, however, the generator which provided light and ventilation for the place failed, and Mayor Périers organized a complete evacuation.

Those killed on that horrible night of June 6-7 numbered only a few German soldiers, but they included 900 French citizens of Saint-Lô. Additional bombing on the days following brought the death toll to nearly 1,300. Without considering the even greater numbers of injured, more than 10 per cent of the population of the city had been killed. But the wonder is that it was not 90 per cent. As frequently is the case in a particularly violent but non-fatal automobile accident when people look at the wreckage and say, "How could anyone have survived that?"—so anyone who might have seen the ruins of Saint-Lô would have been moved to ask, "How could anyone have escaped that bombing?"

Often when people suffer the loss of loved ones or find themselves the victims of calamity, they demand to know *why*. Sometimes that question goes to the very problem of life itself, and explanations for the suffering of the innocent are never easy and seldom satisfactory. Surely the citizens of Saint-Lô must have asked a thousand times, why was their city marked for destruction? The question recurs: Was this bombing really necessary? Was this catastrophe the result of some shortcomings of the people? Was it the result of German activity and the inevitable consequence of modern war in that area? Or did it result from shortcomings of Allied military commanders—shortcomings in military intelligence; shortcomings in concepts of the capabilities, limitations, and proper uses of air power; shortcomings in moral responsibility for the conduct of war?

Truly enough, Saint-Lô stood at an important communications point for the defense of western Normandy, and the Germans had maintained important military headquarters (for the LXXXIV Corps and for Military Administrative Area A) there. But *all* German military units, save a few subaltern officers and guards, had withdrawn from the city *before* June 6. (At the same time, the inhabitants were *forbidden* to leave.) Most of the troops had left several days before, and the last units pulled out just the day before. This final withdrawal on June 5 may have represented a coincidence in timing, but one cannot escape the suggestion that the German command was anticipating the attack of June 6. This would imply two serious Allied errors of intelligence: (1) the failure of counter-intelligence in denying to the Germans information on the planned bombing of Saint-Lô; (2) the failure of tactical intelligence to keep track of German troop movements, and thus to be unaware of the German evacuation of Saint-Lô. One prominent citizen of Saint-Lô spoke of a rumor which he had heard from an American air officer

—that the Americans thought there were forty thousand Germans in Saint-Lô at the time of the bombing. If that was true, certainly there were serious shortcomings in Allied military intelligence. If shortcomings there were, it was Saint-Lô that suffered the consequences.

In a city of no more than twelve thousand inhabitants whose only activities which even generously could be called “industrial” consisted of a cider mill beyond the northeast corner of town and a paper mill near the northwest corner, the people had reason to think themselves beyond the scope of such saturation raids as had hit the great port of Hamburg or the great steel center of Essen. The railroad was only a secondary line connecting the Paris-Cherbourg, Paris-Granville, and Brest lines. No stretch of the imagination could include Saint-Lô among those industrial targets marked for destruction in the strategic bombing offensive. Strategic bombing is aimed at the enemy’s capacity to make war; that is, its object is to cripple his economic war potential.

If the bombing of Saint-Lô did not fit into the category of strategic bombing, then it must have been tactical. Then, as now, the Air Force recognized three priorities for the use of tactical aviation: first, the gaining of air superiority by attacks against enemy airfields and aviation; second, isolation of the battlefield to deny movement of enemy forces into the battle area; third, direct support (the Air Force now insists upon using the word “cooperation”) of ground troops. Obviously the bombing of Saint-Lô was not aimed at the German air force, and certainly it was not made in response to calls from ground troops just then completing their assault of the beaches. Actually, the bombing of Saint-Lô fell into priority two: isolation of the battlefield; the air forces had been instructed to prevent movement through the city. Their method was not to send dive bombers to destroy the bridges and blow strings of craters in the roads where they pass through narrow defiles of hedgerows and elevated fields; rather their method was to send heavy bombers of the strategic air forces to obliterate the city—to make road blocks by spilling the rubble of homes and shops and schools and hospitals and churches into the cratered streets.

As for the actual military advantage obtained by the bombing, none impresses itself very readily. In his official report, General Eisenhower paid tribute to the success of the air forces in isolating the battlefield before D-Day, but his emphasis was upon the destroyed bridges across the Seine, not upon the destroyed cities at road junctions. Perhaps there was delay for the Germans, but it is difficult to show that the destruction of Saint-Lô contributed substantially to that effect. It may have been inconvenient for the German mechanized and motorized columns to have to bypass the city, but it was far from impossible. The bombing did not prevent power-

ful German forces from meeting the invasion and contesting it hedgerow by hedgerow across Normandy. It did not prevent the crack Panzer Lehr Division from moving up for a sharp counterattack against the 29th and 30th divisions as they fought toward Saint-Lô on the night of July 11. The bombing hardly could have been considered as making the ground attack toward Saint-Lô quicker or easier. As was found at Cassino and at Caen, rubble is just as easy to defend as are whole buildings, and indiscriminate aerial bombing of a city does little or nothing to assist the advance on the ground.

But the battling for Saint-Lô was done mainly among the hedgerows honeycombing the higher ground which rings it. It was not a fortified town nor was it situated in a good defensible position. Little fighting therefore went on in the streets. Some dive bombing in support of the ground troops, artillery fire, and mines contributed to the sea of destruction, but the significant destruction already had been accomplished by the heavy raids of June 6-7 and the days immediately following. After the 29th Division had occupied the high ground around Martinville to the northeast, and the 35th Division had taken Hill 122 and the high ground to the north, the Germans had withdrawn to the hills to the south of the city to continue their defense by artillery.

If Allied bombing was aimed at German troop concentrations, of course it failed, because the Germans had left. But even if they had not, most of them probably would have escaped. It was bitterly ironical that almost the only buildings not hit were those of Caserne Bellevue—the permanent French military post at the southern edge of the city which Allied intelligence maps indicated as the location of the “largest troop concentration billeting of German enlisted men.” The insane asylum, just three hundred yards away, and the Ste. Genéviève School for Girls, and St. Joseph’s elementary school, within two hundred yards, were totally destroyed—but not the military barracks. One other small installation escaped the bombing—the electric power station. This was only a distributing station for electricity coming from Lille, and as such would hardly be a major strategic bombing target, but presumably it would have been more appropriate for attack than were the public buildings, hospitals, schools, churches, and homes.

Least understandable of all for the local citizens is the fact that they received no advance warning. Even the local Resistance leader first learned of the bombing attacks when the bombs started falling. Even granting that it was necessary to destroy their city in order to interrupt German communications, they still cannot see why some warning to the population could not have been given. This question receives special emphasis when it is recalled that the Germans already had withdrawn anyway. Some still insist that no more than seven Germans were to be found in Saint-Lô at the time of the

bombing. There were occasions when even enemy cities were given warning by leaflets of an impending raid. But this was a courtesy withheld from the allied cities of Normandy.

All this raises serious moral questions. Perhaps it is one of the major misfortunes of modern times that moral issues—particularly with respect to the conduct of war—have often been relegated to an inconsequential place. Yet the importance which nations professed to attach to the principles of international morality at the Nuremburg and Tokyo trials of war criminals would suggest that mankind still demands respect for moral law and still seeks its temporizing influence on the waging of war.

War becomes terribly depersonalized for its participants. An anti-tank gunner sees in an enemy tank only a dread machine bent on his own destruction—not a driver who is someone's son and someone's loved one; the air gunner sees only a dangerous, heartless machine in an enemy aircraft; even an infantryman sees in his sights—if anything—only an impersonal moving object, or some dangerous animal. So air officers coolly planning the destruction of Saint-Lô saw only a darkened area on a map; and the pilots and bombardiers saw only a cluster of impersonal buildings—they did not see the burned children, the dead priest, the mutilated women, the homeless refugees. To a considerable extent this impersonal attitude is essential even to carry on the necessary activities of such a grim business as war, for it would be disastrous for soldiers to wear their feelings on their sleeves. But it is too easy to permit this attitude to carry beyond the realm of the necessary.

Infantrymen are taught that in direct combat they seldom will see their adversaries; they must gain fire superiority by directing their weapons against all the areas *likely* to be occupied by the enemy. But can this same approach be carried over to aerial bombardment—that is, to bomb all the places where the enemy is likely to be—when this involves the destruction of cities and death and injury to thousands of the civil population—whether friendly or enemy?

Principles as old as those drawn up by St. Augustine in his "Conditions of Just War" may have a direct application, not only to the conduct of modern war in general, but to as specific a thing as the bombing of Saint-Lô. One of those principles, for example, was that it must be necessary, that is, there is no other recourse for restoring justice; a second, that the good to be attained must be greater than the attending evils; a third, that right intention, that is, the objective of restoring peace and justice, must be maintained; and a fourth, that only so much violence may be used as is necessary to achieve the ends.

Measured by these criteria, the bombing of Saint-Lô seems to rest on frightfully weak moral grounds. St. Augustine was writing of resort to war in general, but moral responsibility might apply his



thoughts as well to this kind of situation. The saturation bombing of Saint-Lô can hardly be regarded as *necessary* from at least two considerations: (1) the method used—saturation bombing instead of pinpoint bombing of specific objectives; and (2) the results achieved—no military effort can be considered necessary when it fails to achieve significant military advantage for its originator.

Disregard of the second principle mentioned above—that the good to be attained must be greater than the attending evils—follows almost by default. The good resulting from the bombing is hard to find; the resulting evil is still to be found on all sides a generation later. Even if German troops had been known to be in the city, or even if the bombing had been effective in delaying German troop movements, it still would be seriously open to question whether the resulting evil would not outweigh the military advantage. Such results should have been obvious to anyone willing to give a thought to the matter; but there appears to be no evidence that the consequences for the people of Saint-Lô were even taken into account by the “liberators.”

In total war it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between legitimate military and nonmilitary targets. But this does not mean that the effort should not be made. There is a difference between an air attack which is aimed at a tank factory, for instance, and which in the course of that attack also destroys a school or hospital and kills civilians without any intention of doing so, and the air attack which sets out to destroy a city in complete disregard for the death of civilians and the destruction of homes and public buildings. Again it becomes the nature of total war for the combatants to forget the purposes for which they took up arms, and their sole objective becomes victory itself. But in a war waged with a maintenance of *right intention*, the war always is seen as a means and not as an end in itself. Forgetting that is what makes it common for Americans to “win the war, but lose the peace,” and it is what can sow seeds of discontent and war for the future—when a city is bombed to destruction for immediate military expediency without regard for the long-term results or fundamental objectives of the war. What kind of deliverance is it to remove the Nazi menace by destroying the cities of the victims? Little wonder is it that sentiment is so strong for peace in France now, and the determination so pronounced to avoid any such future “liberation” at almost any cost.

As for the fourth principle cited above—only so much violence should be used as is necessary to achieve the ends—again the shortcoming seems obvious. Allied air forces were not content with the severe bombing which began at eight P.M. on June 6. They returned again and again through the night—denying even the rescue of persons entrapped by wreckage of the preceding raid. Whether the

purpose was to hit German troops, or whether it was to make a road block of Saint-Lô, so much violence seems to have been completely unnecessary. Repeated raids only served to multiply the evil consequences without contributing anything significant to the military result.

For some reason many men in this modern age are not impressed by appeals to morality as such. It is not enough to suggest that a given action is morally right or wrong. For them moral actions must be justified on pragmatic or expedient grounds; they must be able to see in it some advantage to themselves. Thus some Americans are interested not in how their policies and actions affect people in France, or Germany, or Japan, but only to what extent they themselves stand to benefit. As a matter of fact, such consequences usually can be found in moral actions if one has the insight of understanding—indeed they become moral in consequence of their effects upon people and society. For these people, the present state of world affairs, a few years after winning complete military victory, ought to be enough to suggest some shortcomings in the conduct of the war. The whole doctrine of indiscriminate bombing needs to be re-examined in the light of its long-term consequences, as well as its moral implications.

An unbroken spirit is, if anything, more difficult to maintain through bombings by friendly powers than by an enemy. It is more difficult because there is none of that attitude of defiance and of determination to fight back which builds up against the despair of enemy attacks. And in rebuilding, there is likely to be less of that determination to "show" the enemy what capabilities and energies still remain. It is the same as with a soldier who gets caught in friendly machine-gun fire; he finds that much worse than being caught by enemy fire, for all the means of removing the menace are not open to him, and he is overwhelmed with a terrifying helplessness, an inability to do anything in a positive way against that thing which threatens his destruction.

Tasks of evacuation and relief left by the bombing of Saint-Lô were almost overwhelming in their magnitude and complexity. Fortunately, some people had been able to leave the city before June 6. But most, not conceiving that their city could be a major bombing target, remained. The women patients of Bon Sauveur Asylum had been removed to an old château. The St. Paul Sisters of Chartres remained with the old people and the children of the Hospice, but they were located across the street from the entrance to the tunnel, and they were able to take refuge there while their medieval buildings were being destroyed.

The Germans would not permit anyone to leave immediately before June 6, but a few days after the bombing, mass evacuation be-

gan. More than four thousand went only to Le Hutrel, a small village just to the south, until they were driven farther on by the July battles. Other people remained—especially on the farms around the outskirts—until July 14, when, as the ground battles approached, they moved out with a few personal possessions to farm communities in the vicinity of Mortain, about thirty-five miles to the south.

Several families had begun preparations to move southward as soon as they heard about the landings on June 6, but then many of those who survived the bombing remained for several days in the hope that liberation was close at hand. The Lecaplain family remained in this hope until about the end of June. Then they caught a glimpse of a German newspaper which shattered their supposition that the Americans and British were in control of virtually all the area from the Seine through Brittany. Sensing that hard battles were yet to be fought, they joined many of the others in going to the Mortain area to live for a while with friends—only to find themselves once again practically in the front lines when the Germans launched their counteroffensive around Mortain a few weeks later.

The Delaunay family lived in the hedgerows south of Saint-Lô until about the first of July, and then they too moved southward toward Mortain. They carried with them only themselves, the clothes they wore, and very little else. En route someone gave them a wheelbarrow in which they could carry a few things, and with this they made their way to the home of some relatives. They remained there until the German counterattack, and then they went up to Granville, on the west coast of Normandy.

Wherever they went, the refugees shared some of the same experiences of precarious living under hostile surveillance. Frequently a group of refugees would settle at some farm, only to be dispossessed a few hours or a few days later when some German unit arrived searching for quarters. From time to time they would see one of their number executed. Again a town in their path would be bombed.

Naturally it was a great relief to these refugees, wherever they happened to be, when the American breakthrough came, and they were able to pass through the lines. Always they affected enthusiasm in greeting their liberators, and they showered fruit and flowers on American tanks and trucks passing by. Yet a part of that enthusiasm was an affectation adopted for the purpose of sharing in the cigarettes and candy and food items with which the Americans were so generous. Their smiles sometimes covered a deep resentment against the mass bombing of their towns and homes. Some families faced greater disappointment when at last they were able to return to their own homes. One family which had left from near Sainte-Mère Église, for instance, endured the uncertain life of refugees just living in the hope of going home again, and then after a long trip back to the

north they had felt the exciting heartbeat of a return to home country as they approached their neighborhood—but then their anticipation had dissolved in tears as they came within view of their farm, and saw the buildings now only a collection of charred ruins.<sup>1</sup>

The return of the refugees to the ruins of Saint-Lô and the surrounding farms began about August 4—by which time Mortain itself was about to become a battle area again in the abortive German counteroffensive toward Avranches and the sea.

Mutual aid, cooperation, and outside assistance all helped life return to Saint-Lô. Two examples of the latter may be mentioned here: the Irish Hospital and Don Suisse. Out on the Rue de Bayeux stood the white wooden huts of the Irish Hospital, surrounded by trim green lawns. The French Services of Reconstruction built the houses, but they were completely equipped—wards, aluminum-lined operating room, laboratories, radiology rooms, maternity ward, dispensary—by the Irish Red Cross. Until December 1946 it was staffed by Irish medical personnel. The Swiss contribution was an institution called “Don Suisse,” located on the hillside to the south of Notre Dame and the “acropolis.” Its principal work began later—in April 1946, but it did valuable work in distributing clothing, shoes, furniture, kitchen utensils, and other necessities to the stricken families; in May 1947 it organized a nursery, a kindergarten school, and a sewing school, which it later turned over to the city. The resurrection of Saint-Lô was beginning.

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<sup>1</sup> For an excellent, accurate account of the life of refugees after D-Day in Normandy, see Raoul Dujardin, *Les Routes sans Oiseaux* (Paris, 1946).

## 5

### Saint-Lô Reborn

Some time after the war had passed beyond Saint-Lô, the suggestion was made that the ruins of the city ought to be left untouched as a monument to the terrible devastation of World War II. Saint-Lô became a measuring stick for the soldiers who saw it to compare with other bombed towns, and when later they came upon such places as Heinsberg or Düren, in Germany, they would say to each other, "This town was hit almost as hard as Saint-Lô." But the suggestion that Saint-Lô should not be restored was never even considered seriously by the inhabitants. People of Normandy are deeply attached to their homes; they preferred to live in rubble in the same old place rather than go away to strange places. Those returning to Saint-Lô wanted to bury their dead, and then to rebuild their homes on the same old lots and make things "like they used to be."

The rebuilding tasks—taking into account the human as well as the physical problems involved—were of almost unimaginable complexity. Saint-Lô, the destroyed capital of the war-devastated department of Manche, now was being called the "capital of ruins." Most of the other towns of the department—and of Normandy in general for that matter (Manche was one of five departments which had been carved from the old province of Normandy)—had suffered similar fates. Destroyed towns lose their individuality. The information service of the United States Army released a photograph at the time of soldiers moving through the street of an almost completely destroyed town, where fire and smoke still obscured the whole scene. The army had provided a caption which stated simply, "This is a small town of la Manche." The local newspaper in Saint-Lô recently republished the picture with the observation that the destruction was such that it was difficult to know to what part of the department these smoking ruins belonged. "It is a corpse which

cannot be identified." But anyone who had seen those times, and now looked at the photograph, would be reminded of the flames and smoke and the dead of his own city.

Farm villages and other places which had been missed in the bombing became sites of bitter combat and so victims of destruction in the ground battles. Something of the extent of the ruins of which Saint-Lô was the capital is suggested by these figures given out shortly after the war:

Population of the department: 438,000  
Those suffering property damage: 187,000  
Communes (townships) suffering partial or complete  
property losses: 617 of 648  
Churches totally or partially destroyed: 313 of 651  
Real estate destroyed or damaged: 78,466  
Losses of cattle: 105,000  
Apple trees destroyed: 300,000

In this land where dairying and apple growing are the principal farm activities, losses of cattle and trees meant not only a serious reduction in food resources, but a consequential loss of money resources so badly needed for reconstruction as well.

Actually it would have been much simpler to build a new city on a new site than to rebuild Saint-Lô. From Agneux and the railroad station on the west to the stud farm on the east, and from the asylum on the south to Saint Georges-Montcocq on the north, only one ruined tower, a few columns of Notre Dame, and series of barren walls and gutted houses rose above the rubble which covered the whole area. Before the return of the refugees the army had cleared a vehicular path through the town to permit passage of weapons and supplies. After the troops resumed their attack to the south of Saint-Lô on July 27, division engineers had to work eight hours, through the night, with bulldozers, shovels, trucks—and mine detectors—in order to clear a path for jeeps alone. It was two days before tanks could get through.

The first task of the returning citizens was to remove the dead, for hundreds of them remained buried under the rubble. Then the big job was to clear the rubble, put in new sewers and mains, and build new streets. Five thousand German prisoners of war were brought in for the cleanup operations. With these five thousand working daily, it took three years just to clear the rubble. Prefabricated huts were brought in from Germany, Switzerland, Finland, and America, and other temporary buildings were set up for emergency housing and for commercial enterprises. But work on the new permanent buildings began on a small scale only in 1948.

Headquarters for the reconstruction program were set up in an old, four-story brick barrack at the Caserne Bellevue. There the various agencies sharing in the coordination of work in Saint-Lô

and its environs had their offices. On the second floor was the War Damage Service; on the third, the office for the Saint-Lô region of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism (MRU); on the fourth, the Cooperative Society of Reconstruction and Urban Reconstruction. This cooperative society, known as the Société Coopératif "Liberté," was the agency which obtained the additional financing needed from private sources and was the instrumentality through which the owners were able to undertake specific projects of rebuilding.

Contractors were invited to submit competitive bids on one or more stated tasks by specified dates for given groups or blocks of buildings. It was made clear that the bid price should include all costs and such expenses as taxes and any costs incidental to bringing in out-of-town labor. Contracts would be awarded to the contractor making the lowest bid for each lot, except that if a single contractor submitted bids for several lots, the sum total of which amounted to less than the total of other lowest bids submitted separately, he would be awarded the contract for all those lots.

Some intimation of the continuing importance which paperwork plays in any major undertaking in France may be deduced from noting the documents which a contractor had to submit with his application. For some time already contractors doing business with the Cooperative Society had had to submit the following: (1) an extract of the *casier judiciaire* (a court record which the clerk of each local court keeps on every Frenchman born in his district) for each administrator, deputy, and manager of the company; (2) an extract of the tax rolls showing the amount of taxes to which the company was subject; (3) a certificate from the company's local commercial association testifying to the administrative regularity at the time of its admission into the association; (4) two certificates of participation and good standing in social security programs as of no longer ago than three months; (5) a certificate dating no more than one month previously attesting to the financial solvency of the company. It was necessary to submit these papers again if it had been done earlier. Recently certain other requirements had been added. Now the following items had to be attached to the application: (1) a list of references; (2) two certificates of capacity issued within the last two months by recognized architects; (3) a copy of their professional card; (4) an estimate of possibilities in materials and labor; (5) the composition of the company's technical staff. These precautions should have precluded the entry of "fly-by-night" operators to say the least. But reasons for such requirements seem clear enough in such a complex undertaking as this. Applicants were screened by a commission, and they could be refused without the necessity of an explanation. Those approved

were granted letters of admission. Only then could they submit their sealed bids.

It was fifteen years before the major work of reconstruction could be completed.

A reconstruction official estimated the total cost of the job as rather more than ten billion (old) francs (about thirty million dollars); but with continually rising prices, that figure was subject to major upward revision. Actually the figure is considerably higher for the Frenchman than it sounds for the American, because labor and materials are much cheaper in France than in the United States, and this total represents a much bigger slice of total income than it would in the United States. An official at the city hall pointed out again the difficulties of financing in view of the inability of the national government to provide funds adequate to current requirements. But he emphasized the important part which the Marshall Plan played in making it possible for builders to import the tools and materials which otherwise they would have been unable to get. As he spoke the Marshall plan seemed a pitifully small and inadequate contribution—if it can be styled a “contribution”—to the resurrection of this unhappy city which had been so frivolously destroyed.

For one acquainted with the rubble and open spaces of the bombed-out city in 1944, Saint-Lô still seemed quite familiar in 1951. The old war maps still sufficed to find one's way about, though it was depressing to see that so little had been accomplished in the way of reconstruction after seven long years. But in 1954 the surprise at the change in the preceding three years was as great as the surprise in 1951 at the lack of it during the preceding seven. By 1957 a whole new city was nearing completion.

Immediately the new, modernistic campanile, rising high beside Ste. Croix Church, catches the eye. Then the new observation tower near the old prison door, and the ruined tower of Notre Dame where buildings again crowd close. And opposite the church the splendid new prefecture where a court paved with red asphalt inlaid with white stone and green lawn now replaces what some years earlier was a field of broken stones, craters, and weeds. In the distance, to the south, the splendid white Memorial Hospital comes into view. Closer at hand a new building for telephone and telegraph equipment has been completed on one of the firmest foundations in town—a German concrete blockhouse. The doorway and gate of the old prison, with a few barred windows on either side, stand as a memorial to the men who died there during the bombing. This façade, all that remains of the prison, now stands in an open square surrounded by new stores. The tunnel under the “acropolis,” where so many found refuge for a time after the bombing attacks, still finds some use as a storage place for a wine merchant.



Several new hotels and apartment houses now are occupied, and others are nearing completion. Night lighting effects illuminate the new city. Aside from the bright light pouring through the big windows of some of the restaurants and *pâtisseries*, the rows of boulevard lamps on Place de la Préfecture, and the general streetlighting through the town, special floodlights illuminate the Ste. Croix Campanile, the prison façade memorial, the old statue to the soldiers of World War I which has been remounted at the fork of the streets leading to Notre Dame and the prefecture, the ruins of Notre Dame, the memorial to the victims of the bombing on the southwest escarpment of the "acropolis," and, in yellow light, the restored battlements, walls, and turrets around the "acropolis."

So far the cider mill, a former producer of industrial alcohols, stands untouched by repair activities. It was not seriously damaged, and most of its machinery remains intact, but the apple orchards were so cut down by the war that it was not worth while to attempt operations. The city's other major "industrial" plant, the paper mill, likewise remains unrestored, and the site is being used to prepare surfacing materials for the city's streets.

In late 1951 the new railroad station was finished on the site of the old. The station master has spacious living quarters on the second floor, and with the move of the business offices, the wooden hut next door could be abandoned after seven years' occupancy. The new station is built of yellow brick, and though it is modern, it is similar in profile to the old one. Its high garrets and broken wall-lines give it the familiar look which railroad stations traditionally are supposed to have.

One of the most pronounced changes of all in the area of the railroad station, and one of the most controversial, has been the elevation of the street in order to make an overpass over the tracks. The change has been beneficial for traffic moving through the city, but it has rather isolated the station and made access somewhat more difficult. The new roadway has completely blocked off the easy communication which one used to find between Hôtel de l'Univers on the south side, and the area around Hôtel de la Gare on the north.

Like most other activities, school had been going on in wooden barrack-type buildings. The Municipal College (secondary school) for boys was still able to use a section of its old buildings. A new building was finished for Ste. Genéviève School for Girls. New buildings have been completed, too, for the lycée and for the free schools for boys and girls. They, too, display the advantages of the most modern construction.

Near the western edge of the "acropolis," across what now has become a big open public square from Notre Dame, the big prefecture (something between a state capital and a county court house

in the United States) and the smaller Hôtel du Préfet, the official residence of the prefect, present a trim, attractive appearance. The neat stone walls and moderately slanting slate roofs of those buildings rise in incongruous contrast to the ruins of Notre Dame. The long, four-story administration building is the last word in modern design. The access hall, upon which the various administrative offices open, features broad open stairways guarded by iron grills, and outer walls mostly of glass panes and rows of glass brick in the ceiling which admit a flood of daylight.

These prefecture buildings give a boost to the morale of visitors to this region who may be looking for signs of resolution on the part of these unfortunate people to make a comeback. But this enthusiasm is not shared by all the local citizens. They agree that the new prefecture is an attractive showplace, and is well designed for its purposes—if on a grander scale than necessary. As they see it, it is good for the tourists, but not for the taxes. Yet one comes away with the feeling that the local citizens, too, are filled with pride at this symbol of reconstruction—of defiance against adversity. One suspects, too, that in another decade or so, economic activity in la Manche will have developed to the point that all the facilities of the prefecture will be needed to maintain the government bureaucracy necessary to keep up with it.

One of the most striking new buildings, and certainly one of the most satisfying for the visiting American, is the France-United States Memorial Hospital which now stands on a low, green knoll just southwest of the city. It is one of the most modern general hospitals in the world. Designed by Paul Nelson, an American architect who has lived for many years in Paris, the hospital is an attractive, modernistic building of steel, concrete, stone, and glass, eleven stories high in the wing and nine stories in the center, with two sub-stories below. When finally completed, the hospital will have 450 beds organized in two units of thirty beds each (one to four beds to a room) on each floor. On the first floor operating rooms have been installed in igloo-shaped compartments. Each of these operating rooms has seventy-one spotlights set in the domed ceiling to provide illumination from whatever angle called for by the surgeon. The maternity ward is so arranged that four infants can be kept in each nursery visible through big glass windows to the mothers who occupy the adjacent rooms on each side. Eighty beds are provided for tubercular patients, and twenty for those with contagious diseases.

American participation in this project was the result of the action of some of the veterans of the 29th and 35th divisions, and of the activity of the American Aid to France organization in collecting voluntary contributions in the United States. In the patients' library there is a shelf of books—French versions of *Huckleberry Finn*, *His-*

*tory of the United States*, a pictorial guidebook to New York, and so forth—each with a label designating the donor organization, the Rotary Club of Lafayette (Indiana). Outside the children's ward there is a plaque expressing gratitude to newspaper columnist Drew Pearson for having inspired the "Friendship Trains" several years ago which carried parcels from Americans to children of France.

Yet the American contribution to the Memorial Hospital has been disappointing. When the building was begun in 1949, its sponsors hoped that it might be completed within two years. Financial difficulties delayed the opening of the hospital until 1956, and even in 1958 the whole interior of one wing remained to be finished. It was estimated that the total cost would be about six million dollars. Presumably it was to be a fifty-fifty proposition, but so far the American share of contributions has amounted to no more than one-fourth. The remaining wing, which is to include facilities for the rehabilitation of polio victims, requires some \$1,500,000 for completion.

East of the Place du Champ de Mars, the Ste. Croix—Holy Cross—Church has been restored, and a high, modernistic campanile of white stone has been added. The church is a simple, sturdy structure which was almost wholly rebuilt in 1860, and rebuilt again since 1944. Tracing its origin to a Carolingian abbey (some people claim the history of the abbey goes all the way back to Ste. Hélène, mother of Constantine) which is the oldest religious institution of the department of Manche, the Ste. Croix Church has always held a central place in the devotion of its parishoners.

The cemetery, a block northeast of Ste. Croix, has been restored, and it also had to be considerably extended to receive the dead from the bombing attacks. Where an infantry battalion had its headquarters in a tomb, where soldiers used vaults and tombstones for foxholes, where even the dead could have no rest as German artillery continued to pound furiously for days after the fall of the city, the marks of shell fragments and bullets are still evident on the patched mausoleums and monuments. The sadness of death itself has had to bear the mark of the cause of so much death.

Atop the steep rock of the "acropolis" the old "cathedral," the Church of Notre Dame—now reduced to a single half-tower, empty walls, and a restored apse—sits as a centerpiece in this "capital of ruins." Visible from all parts of the city, and strikingly so from the rimming hills which rise to a height considerably above it, the ruined church stands out serenely like a great, proud ship in a rough, empty sea. An inspiration to native and tourist alike, it has become the very symbol of Saint-Lô in its return to life. It took three and one-half centuries to build the "cathedral" (1330 to 1684); it took a few hours to destroy it. Of the twin towers which once raised their spires 255 feet above the ground, one—the north tower—fell a

victim of a German mine, and the steeple atop the south tower fell under German artillery fire after the Americans had occupied the city. Bombing, therefore, was not wholly responsible for its destruction, but it did gut the nave, crumble the walls, and weaken the rest. Soldiers who passed this way in 1944 paused to point out to their comrades an inspiring curiosity of the ruins: stone dust had clouded what was left of the beautiful blue, white, gold, and gray of the interior; most of the roof was demolished; the walls were crumbling; but, exposed in the midst of this destruction, rose the great crucifix and its supporting arch and pillars, unbroken. But only slight traces remain of the twenty-four chapels which once bordered the aisles and the ambulatory.

It took three and a half centuries to build the cathedral because, without benefit of wealthy endowments, funds were slow in accumulating. A similar situation now imposes delays on the reconstruction. Efforts of The Society of the Friends of Notre Dame, and other groups, succeeded only in raising enough funds to protect the ruins until 1949 and 1950 when some work of restoration could be undertaken. So far this has been restricted to building a chapel within the apse—a section which had been less seriously damaged—and to a beginning to replace the stones in the walls. Only three men—skilled artists from Paris—are working on the church. Their work goes forward slowly, stone by stone. Their first task was to collect all the stones that were usable, and to sort them and stack them in a protected place for replacement. Where possible, they return the stones to their original places. The building will be restored just as it was, except that the half-ruined tower will remain as a memorial to the war. On the northeast corner, the outdoor pulpit, a rarity in this kind of architecture, has been restored. The bells now ring out from a wooden frame housing outside this chapel, and they become the symbol in sound which the ruined church has become in sight. Even in ruins—or perhaps even *more* in ruins—the Notre Dame Church now deserves the tribute which Victor Hugo paid to it as much as it did when he wrote it, June 30, 1836: "Austere like the great steeple of Chartres, graceful like the needle of St. Denis, when one of its carved, light-colored spires looms suddenly from behind the hills, it is a marvelous occurrence in the landscape."

To know life in reconstruction one must go beyond the stage of that sympathetic romanticism of "the toil and sweat, the thrift and perseverance of hardy, industrious people." Women who are cooking the family dinner in a makeshift kitchen, doing the family washing in cold water, hoping for advancement for their children, and perhaps for a day by the sea with them all; men who go out to work on a new building or in a shop in the morning, who look forward to lunch with the family in their crowded barracks at noon,

who like to bring home a little bag of bonbons for *les petits*, and who talk bicycle racing or politics with their friends over a cup of grog; children who are devilish and angelic, who laugh and cry easily as they play among ruins, and who have vivid imaginations and real ambitions. One must recognize and appreciate the everyday obstacles which become so perplexing and so frustrating: the impossible hope of making things as they "used to be in the old days"; the will to recapture old happiness, but the sadness and loneliness left by missing loved ones; the agonizing delays, and the seeming futility of increasing efforts; the clash of tradition and modernity—the eternal struggle of old and new, and the controversy on how to go about restoring the city. All these must be seen in their setting of all the ordinary problems here made more acute: of making a living, of educating the children, of finding some enjoyment for the present as well as for an indefinite future. This is not the building of a model city in an abstract world; it is the regrowth of a destroyed city on the roots of its past, the remaking of a community whose outline will be shaped by the conflict as well as by the consideration, and by the differences as well as by the similarities of the people who make it up.

Understandingly firm sentiment for the city's war victims is still evident in Saint-Lô. On June 6, 1945, a crowd of thousands gathered before the ruins of Notre Dame for a memorial service on the first anniversary of the bombing. June 6 continues to be remembered not as D-Day for the great Allied invasion so much as a memorial day for the city's own victims of the great Allied bombing attacks. In 1954, while others were celebrating the tenth anniversary of the D-Day landings, the people of Saint-Lô again were participating in solemn memorial services on the tenth anniversary of the bombing of their city. President René Coty that day became the third head of state to visit Saint-Lô since its liberation. General Charles de Gaulle, then provisional president, had come in 1945 to congratulate the inhabitants in their determination to rebuild the city, and President Vincent Auriol had come in 1948, when the city still was nothing but ruins and rubble, to express his admiration for the will, "in this vast cemetery of stones, to reconstruct a city."

The portal of the destroyed prison has become fixed as a shrine for patriots who died there. Tablets now commemorate those men, and wreaths and flowers are placed there regularly by a people who have not forgotten their sacrifice. Along the road to Tessy-sur-Vire, beyond the Caserne Bellevue, is the rifle range where so many of the men of Saint-Lô went to their deaths before German firing squads rather than deny their country or rather than cease their resistance to its enemies. Neither have the people of Saint-Lô for-

gotten them, but daily they grow in stature as martyrs to the life which they held so precious.

But for all this, Saint-Lô does not live only in the past, nor does it succumb to the enervation of self-pity. Warnings that the people of Normandy were quite hostile toward Americans because of the bombings seem wholly unjustified. Bitterness would seem a quite natural and a justifiable reaction to the bombing attacks. Indeed Nazi propaganda in 1944 had attempted to exploit this likelihood by printing up leaflets showing photographs of Saint-Lô and other Norman towns with the caption, "This is liberation!" Yet this apparently was not effective. In fact many people, though some adults strongly disagreed, seemed to have persuaded themselves that the bombing really had been necessary, and young people who had gone through the ordeal as children had been convinced of its necessity. Perhaps this is just as well, for a conviction that all the suffering and loss had been imposed unnecessarily surely would make it unbearable.

Economic activity has centered in large part on the construction work. Though it often did not seem so to those waiting for buildings, this was an activity which one day would be finished. The very magnitude of the work suggested that its termination would make necessary further important readjustments.

Otherwise, Saint-Lô continues to be what it has always been; not an industrial city, but a trading and commercial center for the important agricultural area which surrounds it. Most shops and business activities are grouped in three general areas at present: along the east of the open square, Place du Champ de Mars; near the center of the city where l'Enclos merges into the Place du Champ de Mars; a lowland area from the cliffs at the southern and western faces of the "acropolis" to the river and the railroad station on the other side. All are well stocked with a great variety of goods.

At the sound of the noon siren (a souvenir of the war), all work and business activity stops as suddenly as though quick-frozen, and until two P.M. the shops look as though their owners were away on an extended vacation. The two-hour lunch period is common to most of Europe, but another closing time which is observed with a completeness in Saint-Lô not found in the larger cities is Monday forenoon. Monday is a half-holiday instead of Saturday for the shopkeepers.

Saturday is market day in Saint-Lô, and early in the morning people are at work, pitching tenting, unloading trucks, arranging displays on the open square. Soon varnished, two-wheeled, black-topped carriages, drawn by well-groomed horses—conveyances not in evidence all week—are appearing in the streets from all directions. The farmers, dressed in their favorite dark-striped trousers and plain dark coats, and the older women usually in plain, dark-colored

dresses and dark straw hats—join the throngs in the marketplace, and then do the other errands that have accumulated for this day in the city. Every kind of goods is to be found for sale in these tented or open stalls—farm produce, fruit, shoes, dresses, jewelry, pastry, flowers, candy, dry goods, yarn, sheet music, men's clothing. The crowds fill the narrow lanes which run between the stalls, as the girl singer and accordianist, plugging sheet music, compete with the hawker, selling some new kitchen gadget, for their attention. Actually the prices are about the same as in the regular stores, but here is where the crowds gather, and there appears to be a tremendous turnover of merchandise.

A casual look at window displays in Saint-Lô might suggest that modern household conveniences and electrical appliances are quite abundant, and the relatively low prices of many items might suggest a high standard of living—even according to American standards. But a glance into a few homes will indicate a sharp contrast between the number of refrigerators and radios there, for example, and in the shop windows. Food is abundant, for Normandy is an important food-producing region, but still the cost of food, clothing, and shelter—in their bare essentials—leaves little over for the conveniences. To some extent this situation was rather aggravated by the stimulus to prices given by the large number of relatively well paid construction workers in town. Yet their wages did not approach the American pay scales for the same work. An ordinary laborer in 1951 made about twenty-five cents an hour, while a skilled worker made about thirty-seven cents an hour; by 1954 a substantial increase had raised these figures to forty-six and fifty-seven cents an hour, and further increases followed.

An old craftsman who lived out at the edge of town wove chair seats—he used to make whole chairs, but no longer. He had a fairly large house, but he lived and worked in the big central room. It was a kitchen with a big, long table in the center and wooden benches alongside, a bed in one corner and an old cupboard in another—the whole thick with dirt. His wife lost a leg when artillery fire hit the house in July 1944. Just recently he had finished rebuilding a smaller house a few yards down the road where his three sons slept. He ordered his weaving material, by post, from Paris at 2,300 francs the kilogram; he was able to make eight chair bottoms, which sold for 700 francs each, from one kilogram of material, and he could make three a day (when he was not busy rebuilding his house, or fishing); this meant he could earn \$3.50 a day in 1951—which was considerably more than the skilled construction worker made then. In terms of bread, potatoes, and cheese, this seemed an adequate income; in terms of refrigerators or radios—not to mention automobiles—it did not seem to be very much.

A great deal of activity goes on at the railway marshaling yards just north of the passenger station. A few other industries cluster about the railroad—a meat-packing plant a kilometer up the track, the old paper mill which now is being used for preparing road building materials, a lumber yard across the track.

But most business activity relates directly or indirectly to farming. Here the orchards and the meadows—the apples and the cattle—are the central features. Both were seriously damaged in the war, but the dairying particularly has made a good recovery. One of the important dairy regions of Europe (sometimes called “Norman Switzerland”), Normandy ships out important quantities of butter, milk, cheese, and meat to Paris and to England. Some grain fields are to be found here and there, but around Saint-Lô, grass and hay are the principal crops of the small, hedge-bound fields. One important development in this region since the war has been the growth of farm cooperatives and modern dairy-processing plants. Where ten to twelve years ago most of the butter and cheese were being made on the farms, nearly all the milk now goes to these modern plants for pasteurization and for processing.

One institution of special interest to farmers is the stud farm in the eastern section of Saint-Lô. Here, in the most important of the twenty-two such places maintained by the Ministry of Agriculture, the finest Norman stallions are kept. This district is the chief breeding center for saddle horses in France, but hunters, show horses, trotting racers, farm driving horses, and Percheron draft horses are also important. The beautiful brick barns suffered the kind of damage common to the city, and just recently two sections have been restored; 250 stallions were brought back in July 1951. Later this number rose to 450, to be compared with a pre-war number of 490.

Politics in France seems to be something of an all-season sport. Political posters—at least in an election year—fill blank walls everywhere. In Saint-Lô a glance at the posters—particularly those on the garden wall near the city hall—during an election year might lead to the conclusion that this town must be all Communist. Every poster at that particular location in 1951 was Communist. Only here and there was an appeal made on the basis of local interests; most of the posters were the same as those seen all the way across France. Several played upon the themes of peace and American domination. One, for example, pictured an octopus with stars and stripes and dollar signs, and below was the appeal to keep “LES AMÉRICAINS EN AMÉRIQUE!” Another read substantially as follows:

The Voice of America

1st. MacArthur declares: “The military disposition of the U.S.S.R. in Asia is essentially defensive.” (U.S. Senate)



2nd. The American ambassadors in U.S.S.R. and the People's Democracies declare: "We have not had any indication to cause us to believe that these countries are planning to attack. (Testimony of Perkins, representing Acheson in House of Representatives, 27 Feb. 1951).

3rd. Leaders of R.P.F., Radicals, M.R.P., S.F.I.O. lie to impose sacrifice on the French under the pretext of the "Soviet menace." Note: U.S.S.R. wants peace.<sup>1</sup>

A direct, anti-American appeal, was this:

"More than 5 million Communist votes will be disaster for direction from Washington."—Raymond Cartier, *Paris-Match*, 2 June 1951.

Disaster for American Billions	} Is a defeat for the makers of war. Is a victory for peace.

To vote for the American Party, from Socialists to Independents—R.P.F. is to vote for fascism and war.

In order to vote French, for bread, liberty and peace,

Only one way: put your confidence in the candidates of the French Communist Party.

This same sentiment received more graphic expression in another poster. In the center was a cartoon showing four American MP sergeants. Each carried a placard labeled respectively, "Vote R.P.F.", "Vote S.F.I.O." (Socialist), "Vote M.R.P.", "Vote Rad. Soc." Above the cartoons were these statements:

Mr. Truman has said:

An S.F.I.O. vote is a vote for us.

An M.R.P. vote is still a vote for us.

An R.P.F. vote is always a vote for us.

And below it read:

Only  
the Communist votes  
are not American  
They are  
for France  
For peace!

Over one of those outdoor urinals which seem to be a French "peculiar institution" was tacked another Communist poster. This one showed a map of the USSR, with curved arrows pointing into it from every side. The caption was, "Here are the American bases in the world; 2,000,000 American soldiers prepare for war."

Few political posters remained in 1954. This was not an election year. But the Communists continued to assert themselves. Two appeals were noticeable. One was the announcement of a rally to be held in Paris "For peace and independence." The second was a warning against the European Defense Community (EDC). This

<sup>1</sup> RPF—General de Gaulle's "Rally of the French People"; Radicals—Radical Socialists, a moderate party neither radical nor socialist; SFIO—Socialist; MRP—the Popular Republican Movement—a moderate, left-wing Catholic party.

showed the figure of a German soldier getting ready to throw a "potato masher" grenade. This provided the background for a statement to the effect that EDC would revive the *Wehrmacht*.

An assumption rather widely held has been that chaos or poverty automatically becomes a breeding ground for Communism. A statement attributed to Stalin some time ago was to the effect that Communism could not lose in a third world war. If the Soviet Union won a military victory, then it could impose its system and its doctrine on the vanquished; if it failed to win, there still would be such destruction, chaos, and poverty resulting from the war that Communism would spread anyway—just as it spread in Europe after World War II. Communism surely should have taken root in a city of such destruction as Saint-Lô. But the fact is that the district of Saint-Lô, in spite of the great preponderance of Communist posters, has not elected a Communist deputy for the National Assembly. In fact the Communist candidate in 1956 received only 16,800 of the 206,400 votes cast, while the MRP candidates led with 36,380 votes.

Much is made of the instability of the French government prior to the return of de Gaulle, frequently with an intimation that this simply reflected the inherent instability of the French people. As far as the government was concerned, this needs to be modified in two respects. First of all, the national government was not nearly so unstable as it appeared to be, for undersecretaries and an experienced civil service preserved the ordinary functions of government and gave it real continuity; moreover, a change in premiers since the war did not generally mean a sweeping change of policy. The other aspect is the local; in the prefectures and cities and communes, very little of that frequent change which seemed to characterize the national government was to be found. France is a centralized, unitary state, not a decentralized nor a federal one. But municipal officials are elected from local areas; they are not appointees from above. Mayors are elected by the city councils. And their election, at least in Saint-Lô, hinges much more upon the stand which candidates take on local issues—their ability to cope with immediate problems of the community—than upon affiliation with national parties. Saint-Lô had the same mayor—Georges Lavalley—from June 6, 1944 to 1952. The secretary to the mayor, Maurice Benoit, held his position through successive administrations. With the detailed work in the hands of a staff of capable, dependable assistants, Mayor Lavalley frequently turned his energy toward broader projects. Twice he went to the United States to assist in raising funds for the Memorial Hospital.

The rebuilding of Saint-Lô was not something which was to be done only in the laying of stone and the mixing of mortar. The city is people, and the people who guide the city since its reconstruction

include some who were pupils in the local schools a dozen years ago. Education in France is highly centralized, and public schools are financed wholly by the national government. The city levies local taxes for streets, sewers, and city services; the *département* levies taxes for roads and railroads; but educational funds come from the common treasury. This, however, does not mean any less local interest in the local schools.

The Lycée (formerly the Municipal College), a co-educational school, is roughly the equivalent of an American junior-senior high school, though it does include an elementary school as well, and here pupils follow a university preparatory course. Education is compulsory in France until the age of sixteen. If a pupil is not to remain in school beyond that age, he remains at the general elementary school. But if he desires the *baccalauréat* and wants to go to the university, he ordinarily transfers to the Lycée at the age of eleven and completes his course there at the age of eighteen. However, it is necessary to pass entrance examinations even for admission to this public school. Application is made, and examinations taken, in July, at the end of the school year, for the session beginning the next October. Each year thirty to forty graduates enter the university either at Caen or at Paris. School activities centered in the one building left standing after the bombing, and makeshift arrangements had to be made until new buildings could be completed. Now the Lycée occupies what surely is one of the most modern school buildings in all France—or anywhere else. Here under the direction of M. Lechanteur, the principal, between four and five hundred pupils pursue their courses. About half of the pupils, from the outlying area, room and board here. They live in neat, comfortable quarters—the younger pupils in large dormitory rooms, the older ones with private “roomettes” of their own, and they eat in an attractive dining room where chairs and four-place tables have replaced the long tables and benches of the old days. M. Lechanteur is most proud of the classrooms and excellently equipped modern science laboratories. Here, as in America, there is great interest in science, and there is keen competition in industry for engineers and scientists. It is also difficult here to retain teachers, because they constantly are being attracted by the higher pay available in industry. Even here the problem of overcrowding already is arising. Soon more room will have to be found to accommodate the rapidly growing number of pupils.

Elementary pupils until recently were still going to school in prefabricated barracks near the Place du Champ de Mars, though now bright new buildings have been erected.

Catholic schools, with boarding as well as day pupils, match the public system. A secondary school with from three to four hundred pupils is located across the river in Agneaux, and a school for girls

as well as an elementary school for younger boys and girls, Ste. Genéviève's and St. Josef's are operating in new facilities. There the pupils study the same subjects found in most American schools. In foreign language English is a must, and pupils ordinarily take one other—Italian, German, or Latin—as well.

Amidst desolation, means for recreation and amusement are, if anything, more necessary than in normal circumstances, but also more limited. Yet people of Saint-Lô, as in most places, seem able to find enjoyment easily, if modestly. Probably the favorite activity is traveling. Most weekend busses and trains are crowded, and the baggage cars are full of bicycles as *voyageurs* ride their bicycles to the station, check them as baggage, ride the train down to the sea-coast, or to Brittany, or to some village of Normandy, and then ride their bicycles away. Often a basket of bread, cheese, perhaps some cold meat, fruit, and always a bottle of wine, goes along for a family picnic dinner. For others a long loaf of bread and a bottle of wine suffice.

Movies here, as in most of the Western world, provide the most popular evening entertainment for those who can afford them. The Cinéma Normandie, on the Place du Champ de Mars, has been transformed from the old stone and concrete barn of a pre-war riding school. Actually the rose-colored seats, the neat interior finished in stone and concrete, the good equipment, make the place a pleasant movie theater. At a recent showing a series of short pictures began at 8:45—first a series of advertisements for cloth, cider, hair dressing, and face cream; then a film on Switzerland, a Bugs Bunny cartoon, a newsreel, and a preview of the picture for the next week; then intermission. By this time the crowd has established itself; the small fry down front in the third-class seats, older men and women in the back—the first-class, and the others in the middle in the second-class seats (at nineteen cents). The feature attraction happened to be a Danny Kaye comedy—with French dialogue! It was something of a letdown to walk out of the gay theater into the dark emptiness that was the center of Saint-Lô. It was a strange contrast to the bright lights of Paris, or to the average American city where theaters usually are in the centers of brilliant lighting and fine buildings. Now another, newer, cinema is to be found on Rue St. Thomas.

Perhaps the favorite sport is fishing—at least the banks of the Vire are lined with fisherman nearly every fair day. But fishing here takes on more of a utilitarian rather than a recreational aspect—and women living in the vicinity come to wash clothes under the shed which has been built for the purpose along the water's edge.

Enthusiasm for sports runs as high in Saint-Lô as in an American town of that size. From June until August bicycle racing holds primary interest. The Tour de France stimulates as much animated

conversation as does the World's Series in the United States. And it stimulates interest in the series of local "minor league" races which go on during and after the big race. In the fall, soccer comes into greater prominence, and Saint-Lô has junior as well as senior teams playing in the local leagues.

In May 1954 the local Rotary Club of Saint-Lô received its charter. The official program for the installation meeting (in which the club from Cherbourg participated) carried on opposite sides of the folder large photographs showing Saint-Lô in 1944 and in 1954. The banner adopted by the club is divided vertically with a dark blue background and flame on the left, representing the night and the bombing, and light blue on the right representing the new day and peace; on the reverse side there is the figure of a tree, broken by bombing, but out of it a new shoot is growing upward. It is a symbol truly representative of the spirit of the men who sit before it.

In movies, in recreation, in sports, people of Saint-Lô turn their attention away from their pressing problems. They are still able to enjoy life.

In and around Saint-Lô life goes on in ways bearing strong resemblance to those of the American Middle West in the 1920's: the horses on the farms; the horses and carriages appearing here and there on the streets on Saturday; the dress of the farmers; the old, wooden railway cars, and the preponderance of railway travel as compared with auto travel; the small automobiles and heavy trucks on the streets; the style of furniture and lamps and electrical fixtures. But the contrast of the old with the new is a striking feature of any old, relatively progressive country. The sudden impact of war has made the contrasts the sharper, and so adjustment the more difficult, in Saint-Lô.

Saint-Lô maintains its intimate contact with the countryside, and its air mixes lightly the smell of cows and warm milk and of illuminating gas, the smell of apple blossoms and of open urinals, the smell of the farmyard and of railway coal smoke, the smell of clover and of sewage, the smell of the chicken house and of sourdough, the smell of mildew and of flower gardens, the smell of plaster and of aging straw. Saint-Lô is rebuilding, and the sounds of hammers and saws and heavy trucks and trains and wagons compete with those of church bells and voices and automobile horns. Saint-Lô is changing, and "the more it changes, the more it remains the same." It sits within a saucer of hills at a big bend in the Vire River where, from a distance, its buildings seem to lie like unfinished jewels on a green satin cushion. Even the ruins assume a certain majesty, and the ruins of Notre Dame dominate the whole scene as completely

as the old cathedral, in all its grandeur, ever did. On the night of June 6-7, 1944, Saint-Lô was destroyed. Now it has been reborn, and it struggles for greater growth.

## 6

### Fields of Battle

What is the strange fascination which a battlefield holds for men who lived in violence, fought, and skirted death there? Even while the war still was going on in eastern France and Germany, men on leave often would go out of their way to pass across the fields where earlier they had shared in the dangers and effort of combat. Other men would gather eagerly to listen to the accounts that those who had returned brought back—what was going on there now, how did it all look now, what kind of people were there. Generals as well as privates frequented the old battlefields during the wait for transportation home after V-E Day. Since the war, periodicals have recorded the visits of former GI's with their wives, and ex-officers with their sons, pointing out their foxholes and terrain features on the battlefields. While attending the constitutional convention at Philadelphia in 1787, George Washington took time out to ride out to Valley Forge to revisit the site where his little army had endured such suffering nearly ten years before. In his White House desk, President Truman kept a map of the battlefields on which he served during World War I, and he expressed a keen hope that one day he would be able to go back to revisit them. He was expressing an attitude which seems to be common to soldiers of all ranks in many ages.

Certainly few if any of these men ever would want to go through the experiences of those battles again, yet they are willing to recall those experiences, and even to return to the locale. In part this no doubt is due to the same kind of attraction which one feels for any place with which he has strong emotional association with other people. Moreover it is a place associated with personal good fortune. Certainly little in war could be called happy or fortunate, but the very fact that a person has escaped with his life indicates

to him a certain amount of good fortune. In addition there is a good deal of curiosity to be satisfied. In the midst of battle one has little opportunity to establish places and events clearly, and he is always interested in knowing something more about the action in which he took part.

Return to battle scenes gives rise to a feeling of emptiness—like that of a graduate returning after four or five years to his high school or college campus, or like that of someone returning to a neighborhood where he once lived many years ago. Now most of the people who gave those places special meaning are gone, and in their absence, the impression of the place is one of strangeness amidst a vague familiarity. One is alone in familiar settings, and one is conscious, first of all, of the emptiness. But the emptiness and loneliness of the battlefield is magnified, because among the absent are the men who met death here those years ago.

The memory chooses certain incidents and places to cling to and discards others. In some areas the location of places remains as vivid in the mind as though absence had been no longer than a day; the very foxhole which one occupied can be located precisely with no trouble at all. For other areas not the slightest notion remains of how to get there. Possibly one remembers best those places where the most strenuous action took place, but this is not always the case. Perhaps something that has a great deal to do with it is how well oriented a person was in the first place. It is undoubtedly true that in many instances it would be impossible for a person to retrace his steps even a week or a day afterward if he had been removed completely from the scene and then put on his own resources to find his own little field of battle. In any case, battle recaptures or extends the "impressionable age" of a person, and it leaves its impression in the memory as indelible as any experiences of a lifetime.

The memory plays tricks, too, on the sense of distance and direction. Some places which previously seemed very far apart now appear surprisingly close together, and vice-versa. Again it is something like going back to an old school building after an absence of ten or twelve years, and marveling at how close together the basketball goals in the schoolyard now are, though obviously they are hanging from the same oaks as always; or noticing how small the seats have become during your absence. Reliance upon motor transportation makes more difficult the appreciation of distances over ground where the earlier acquaintances had been on foot. The only way really to appreciate distances in infantry battle is to get out and walk over the ground.

A first visit to a spot known previously only as the scene of intense combat requires some effort before one is willing to move about freely without adopting at least a "maneuver crouch" out of deference to enemy eyes which seemingly persist in watching. Even



now one consciously avoids fields which he knows to have been heavily mined during the war.

For the men of the 134th Infantry who were there, the road from Villiers-Fossard to Saint-Lô undoubtedly will remain a "memory road." But ordinary "memory roads" often take years of association to retain any firm nostalgic attraction or vivid recollections. The memory road from Villiers-Fossard to Saint-Lô became fixed indelibly with a single passing. Here a lifetime of association could be packed into an afternoon. Here is the hedgerow where Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Thomsen and his battalion staff had their foxholes after the first day's battle; there is the field where Lt. Halley Dickey and an aid man who had come to pick him up were killed by mines, and where Major Foster H. Weyand and another aid man were painfully wounded; down there is the bridge where mines blew up a tank, and then a jeep of Company I; up the slope is the ruined house which burned all one night, and became a reference point for the infantrymen; that curve is where a German tank rolled head-on toward a battalion column; there is the house where a German machine-gun team held up a company until billows of white phosphorous drove it out; there is the farm known as Emélie, the first objective, where so many men were hit; there is the orchard, near the church, where Colonel Thomsen had his command post at the edge of Saint-Lô.

For a time almost anything will serve as a stimulus to memories of battle. A fireworks display will recall the distant reflections against the clouds of bursting bombs and artillery shells in Normandy on the Fourth of July in 1944, and of streams of colored tracers racing toward each other from airplanes and anti-aircraft guns. Even the weather serves as reminders. A rainy day on a country road—just like the day the regiment marched up to the combat zone. A cool, foggy morning—just like the morning of the first attack toward Saint-Lô. A moonlit night—the arrival of the regiment in Normandy, and the truck convoy which carried it through grotesque villages of crumbled stone and mortar, the cold moonlight of the white ruins of Moon-sur-Elle and Sainte Marguerite.

But the features of Normandy which men who fought there will remember longest are the hedgerows and sunken roads. These, with the orchards and green meadows, give an impressive beauty to the Normandy countryside in peacetime. But in war they were grim obstacles to be overcome, or defensive works to be exploited. The hedgerows are banks of dirt, sometimes containing stones, as much as three to five feet thick at the base and tapering gradually to a thickness of two or three feet at the top. This embankment usually is four to six feet high and surmounted with shrubs or trees. The sides too are grown over with grass and shrubs. There are numerous roads and lanes running between hedgerows, often sunken con-

siderably below the level of the adjacent fields, and these form natural entrenchments and covered communication routes throughout the area. These earth-and-plant fences enclose fields—usually meadows or apple orchards—of irregular sizes and shapes which seem to average toward a rectangle about a hundred yards long and fifty yards wide. A wartime aerial photograph of a typical section of Normandy showed more than 3,900 hedged enclosures in an area of less than eight square miles.

By digging a deep foxhole behind these hedgerows, and covering it with logs and earth, the defender could make himself almost immune to practically all ordinary small arms or light artillery fire. Moreover he was able to maintain observation which was denied the attacker. He could have his guns zeroed in, put an observer up in a tree, and wait. The attacker, on the other hand, usually could not see more than one hedgerow ahead, could seldom see any enemy activity, and when he did discover the enemy's presence by coming under his fire, he was too close to employ his artillery. In a well-organized system of defense in the hedgerows, the Germans usually would hold the first dike with only a few men—frequently armed with machine pistols—as an outpost line. The second row was likely to be defended more strongly; it would have riflemen and machine guns well dug in, with firing slits through the hedgerows. The third line, also held with machine guns and rifles, was more thoroughly prepared, with extensive tunneling and digging. Sometimes machine guns were mounted in trees on the hedgerows, and then fired from a covered foxhole by means of a wire. The entire position was covered by well coordinated artillery and mortar fire. Snipers, mines, and booby traps filled in the defensive pattern. When a heavy attack came, men from the first hedgerow would withdraw to the second or third to continue the defense. Key positions were those at the corners, near junctions of hedgerows, where machine guns could cover the entire field in an exchange of fire with a machine gun in the next corner. These automatic weapons would pin down the attacking troops—would fix them on a target where they would become easy prey to the bursting shells of high-angle mortar fire.

The origin of the hedgerows remains rather obscure. Perhaps some of them date at least from Roman times. There are said to be two kinds of hedges here, the quickset and the dry hedges, of which the first is far more important. They, in turn, are divided into hedges of defense, shelter, orchard, and fodder. Built for the protection of property, the defense hedges usually were made up of thorny shrubs. Shelter hedges also are defensive, but they have the further purpose of serving as windbreaks, and their timber yields wood for building and heating. If the hedgerow trees are for producing fruit, then they are orchard hedgerows, and the fodder

hedges contain any number of varieties of shrubs and trees. In replying to a question about the enclosure of land on a governmental agricultural questionnaire in 1814, the subprefect of Lisieux wrote:

One can safely say that in each commune there exists some enclosed fields and some which are not. The shrubs which serve to form the live hedges are hazel copse, willow, hawthorne, black hawthorn, and elder. At intervals there are planted among the hedges oak, elm, ash, aspen, beech, and poplar. After having reached a certain size they are cut down to about 8 feet above the ground. Though stumps remain they are subject to pruning about every six years as are the other trees. One supports the hedges by bringing them together and forcing, with binders 2½ feet from the ground, branches of trees stuck in the ground opposite each other on each side of the hedge, by means of other branches placed crosswise, which are called crossbinders and which serve to support the first binders and reduce the volume of the hedge.<sup>1</sup>

It is curious how, in spite of the familiarity with France of so many Americans, the difficulties of the rolling terrain, the heavy growth, the hedgerows and sunken roads of the *bocagé* country came as a surprise for American forces landing in Normandy. As a matter of fact the terrain is so difficult that the local inhabitants did not believe that the landings would come in this area. Yet the Americans had prepared little for what they were to find. Many Americans units had had special training in mountain warfare, the attack of fortified positions, and attack through towns; they had been sent to Normandy without any training in hedgerow fighting. They had to improvise after they got there. Teams of riflemen learned to work with engineers and with tanks to blast holes through the hedgerows and advance by fire and movement from one to another. But they learned it in Normandy, not in the weeks of training which had preceded the invasion. When S. L. A. Marshall, deputy theater historian, asked General Eisenhower's chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, whether some of the American troubles in Normandy had not been due to lack of information about the *bocagé* country, General Smith replied:

"Not at all! That wasn't the source of the trouble. The information which we had from the French was more than adequate. Moreover, Field Marshall Sir Alan Brook and General Sir Frederick Morgan had both come out that way in 1940. They told us about the country, describing it quite accurately. They were very pessimistic about our chances of coping with it. But we couldn't believe what we heard. It was beyond our imagination."<sup>2</sup>

It was late on the night of July 13, 1944, when the 3rd Battalion, 134th Infantry had started moving up to relieve the 115th Infantry of the 29th Division preparatory to the launching of an attack to-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Miletus L. Flaningam, "The French Agricultural Questionnaire of 1814," *Agricultural History*, XXIII (Jan. 1949), 68 n.

<sup>2</sup> S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire* (New York, 1947), 108.

ward Saint-Lô by the 35th Division—a coordinated corps attack scheduled for dawn on July 15. Soon after receiving his order, and then issuing his own, Lt. Col. Alfred Thomsen, battalion commander, had left the executive officer to take charge of marching the troops up to the position, and taking his adjutant, intelligence officer, operations officer, and communications officer with him, had set out by jeep to contact the units to be relieved and to prepare to guide his own men to their positions. Four blacked-out jeeps purred softly through the dark night, through the ruins of Moon-sur-Elle, and on up to a position east of the village of Villiers-Fossard. After some searching about, the Colonel had found the command post of the 2nd Battalion, 115th Infantry, in a deep, well covered dugout at the edge of a field. He called down, and then his party followed him down some narrow dirt steps, and crowded into the hole. The light from a gasoline lantern hanging in one corner had grown dim from want of air. This made even more dismal the heavy atmosphere. A pair of dark, tired eyes, set in a gaunt face which was covered with beard and dust, looked up to inquire the mission. The eyes belonged to a major who sat on the floor. He ran his hand through a head of dark hair which evidently had been clipped but now had grown out. He remained silent. His face did not change its blank, tired expression until Colonel Thomsen spoke.

"I understand we are to relieve you folks," the Colonel said.

"Relieve us? Relieve us?" The major found enough energy to shake a captain who was sleeping beside him. "Did you hear that? They are going to relieve us!"

This was about the only news which could have evoked any reaction in the dead faces of these officers and men who bore the mark of weariness from weeks of continuous battle in the hedgerows. But this was not a very reassuring reaction for the newcomers; it sounded too much as if they were inheriting a difficult assignment. One of them said to another, "I wonder if we'll look like that after we have been in here six weeks."

It took three more days of intense fighting and heavy casualties to gain the five kilometers from Villiers-Fossard to Saint-Lô. As Hanson Baldwin wrote in the *New York Times*, "Hour after hour, day after day—and now week after week—the grim, tired soldiers fight bloody close-in battles for 100 yards of shell-pocked meadow. Each hedgerow conquered is a minor campaign won, each pasture and orchard a bitter epic of valor and of death." A story in the army newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*, noted, "Saint-Lô was under its sixth successive day of siege yesterday. The fighting was as hard in its way as the first landings on the toughest beaches on D-Day, one field dispatch said. It added that the whole story of the bloody battle could be summed up in one report which reached a command post

outside Saint-Lô: 'Advanced three hedgerows'—a sizable, bitterly contested advance in this kind of fighting."

At last on the evening of July 18, a special task force from the 29th Division, made up of reconnaissance, tank, tank destroyer, and engineer elements, rolled down the Isigny-Saint-Lô highway from the northeast, picked up an escort of infantry from the 1st Battalion, 115th Infantry, drove past the cider mill and the cemetery, and entered the northeast corner of the city. Patrols then fanned out to probe through the rubble of the destroyed town and establish strong-points for its defense against possible counterattack. Meanwhile the 35th Division had been closing in from the north. In a final dash, the 3rd Battalion, 134th Infantry, reached Saint Georges-Montcocq, northern suburb of Saint-Lô, and patrols from this battalion went into the city from the north. Ever since, veterans of the 29th and 35th divisions have been debating about who captured Saint-Lô.

While the farm areas did not suffer so much from aerial bombing of the kind which hit Saint-Lô itself, the later tactical bombing and artillery fire during the battles in this area cut a great swath of destruction. Villiers-Fossard bears the same marks of war. Ten years later, the church, the school, and one of the two cafés all were operating in prefabricated wooden barrack-type buildings while the work of reconstruction went on. One of the young men working on the school said that he remembered well when the Americans went through here. He had been one of those little eleven-year-old boys who had come out saying, "Any gum, chum? Chocolat pour Maman? Cigarette pour Papa?"

A group of farm buildings at Emélie tells very well the story of war and reconstruction here. Of the buildings grouped around the courtyard of this particular farm, one, a stone structure, still stands in ruins, a second is a wooden prefabricated hut, and the third is a newly built stucco house.

South of Saint-Lô the hedgerow country continues, and the scars of war remain as much in evidence as to the north. Torigny-sur-Vire, a town which was hard hit by shellfire before its capture by the 320th Infantry, now has been completely restored except for the big château which formerly housed a *gendarmérie* post in one side and a museum in the other. Saint Jean des Baissants, a small village which was almost completely destroyed, now has been restored with neat stone buildings throughout. Conde-sur-Vire, the place where in 1944 a patrol of Company L, 134th Infantry, had had a duel with a tank down by the church, and had knocked it out with the assistance of a "Heinz" (57mm antitank gun) and rockets and grenades, has been rebuilt into a very attractive town with a broad open square in the center flanked by a restored church and new buildings, and a new dairy plant at the edge of town.

About a mile and a half southeast of Conde-sur-Vire the farm buildings at La Buste, damaged in the fighting of July 1944, were restored between 1947 and 1949. This is where the 134th Infantry, arriving late on July 29, 1944, first had found French families occupying their homes, at least since entering active combat. Villiers-Fossard had been almost completely abandoned; Saint-Lô was a ghost town, Sainte Suzanne and Conde-sur-Vire practically lifeless. But here joyful people came out to greet the Americans. The best part of it, as far as some of the lucky soldiers were concerned, was the fried chicken which members of the local household brought out. An air raid by a lone German plane—"Bed-check Charlie"—cut these activities short, but the men never forgot the fried chicken. Ten years later, the same family, Ruault, was still living here, and M. Ruault, who ten years previously had been a prisoner of war in Berlin, now was at home too. Mme. Ruault remembers very well giving the chicken to the American soldiers. As a matter of fact, she relates that Germans had been occupying her house, and on that particular day they had ordered her to prepare chicken for their evening meal. She had dressed and cooked ten of the birds, but the Americans arrived as they were almost ready to serve. The Germans fled, and the Americans ate the chicken.

But this also is the place remembered most by members of the Third Battalion for their "Bloody Sunday," the day after their arrival. On that Sunday morning the battalion's attack had moved off at nine o'clock, in about the same way that it had on many previous mornings through this country, except that almost immediately it had run into heavy opposition. The battalion had not had a chance to deploy fully from the wagon-wheel formation which it had adopted for night security. As a consequence all its elements were close together. The battalion command post was only one hedgerow in rear of the front line. Other parts of battalion headquarters and the battalion therefore came under fire when any part of it did. Hours passed with nothing to show but casualties. The calls for "baby buggies"—a euphemism used on the radio for litters—were frequent. Indeed the battalion medical section was having its busiest day at the aid station which it had set up in a small building about a hundred yards off the road. Presently a barrage hit the aid station. One man was holding out his hand to have a finger bandaged; a shell fragment took off the hand. Wounded men lying helplessly on the floor were wounded a second and third time. Medical men were wounded so that they could not care for the others. The surgeon decided to move the aid station back to the rear. A pathetic group it was that emerged from the damaged building and filed out to the road. Bloody bandages fluttered from arms or heads or shoulders; wounded medics carrying worse wounded who had been in one of the barns when mortar shells hit. Others from front-line

companies who were able to walk back joined the battered column, and the French civilians—who had been so gay the night before—now added to the general confusion by coming onto the road with carts piled high with bedclothes, utensils, and foodstuffs. They all trudged down the dusty road in the hot sun toward the rear. Up forward things went from bad to worse. Tree bursts caught the battalion command post and the forward command group of the battalion—and Colonel Thomsen, the commander, was fatally wounded. But in spite of everything, the companies were able to hold firm, even if they could not advance. The next morning the Germans, apparently hurt even worse, had withdrawn, and the advance could go on again.

Decades make little difference to the Normandy countryside. Damaged buildings have been restored, but the hedgerows and sunken roads, the green meadows and orchards look the same. They always, except perhaps during warfare, have an aspect of beauty—the restful beauty of green grass, green trees, and green hedges, but in early spring, when the orchards add a fragrant trim of “apple blossom pink,” the beauty becomes breathtaking. Even in 1944 soldiers would sometimes sing “When It’s Apple Blossom Time in Normandy,” though no blossoms were in sight. In another way a visitor to Normandy now senses something strangely different about the country. It is not simply the absence of cannonfire, machine guns, and motor trucks; it is something else. It is the birds; chirping everywhere. It should be expected that the hedgerows and trees and thickets would provide ideal homes for birds, but there were no birds in 1944. The French writer Raoul Dujardin, who wrote of refugees in Normandy after the Allied invasion in 1944, called his book *Les Routes sans Oiseaux*—“Roads without Birds.”

The farms in Normandy, like those in Brittany, generally are in contiguous tracts where the farmers live near the center of their own land in relatively isolated farmhouses. This is in contrast to other parts of France and much of Europe where farmers live in villages and go out to till widely separated fields. The size of farms in Normandy varies greatly, but they average somewhere near twenty hectares (about fifty acres). Over the years there has been a pronounced trend toward the consolidation of the small holdings. The 57,361 farms registered in Manche in 1929 had become 45,120 in 1954. Some of the displaced farmers are being encouraged to move to the Garonne region and Charente. On the other hand there is a movement toward reclamation of as much as 50,000 acres of marshland. About half the farmers of Manche own their farms.

Most of the farms are devoted to dairy farming, beef cattle, and orchards. In dairying an important change has come about in the last twenty years. Previously most of the making of butter and

cheese and processing of milk was done on the individual farms. Now it is done in big plants (*laiteries*). It does not taste as good as it did in the old days, local inhabitants say, but they grant it is a lot cleaner. Otherwise the nature of the agricultural products has changed little over the centuries. A report of 1814 shows that nearly ten times as much land in the *arrondissement* of Lisieux, for instance, was devoted to pasture as to extensive cultivation, though cultivated crops included wheat, rye, barley, oats, potatoes, peas, beans, hemp, and flax. The pastures, then as now, were mainly for the support of dairy cows and beef cattle (in about equal numbers), and butter and cheese constituted major products. Orchards too were common then—apple, pear, and cherry trees, though the apple was most important, and apple cider was another principal product.<sup>3</sup>

But for soldiers who fought there, the memory holds little of the beauty of the Normandy countryside or of the outlay of its farms. They recall a tense, tiring, hard struggle which was nothing like anything they had encountered. As far as physical exertion alone was concerned it was not nearly so difficult as maneuvers in Tennessee, but all of the attempts at "realistic" training could not bring to them the realism of the battlefields of Normandy. That never could be done unless a soldier knew, day after day, that he was being shot at, and his friends were being killed. One of the generals who served in the Normandy campaign wrote of it:

I doubt if anyone who ever ducked bullets and shells in the hedgerows, waded through the mud on foot, and scrambled over hedgerows never knowing when he might find himself looking into the muzzle of a German tank gun, will look back on those days with any remembered feeling other than of the deadly unrelenting fatigue and danger. Except when the Germans counterattacked, there was so little result to show for so much suffering; just a few hedgerows gained, each one just like those already behind and those still to take.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Flaningam, "The French Agricultural Questionnaire of 1814," *Agricultural History*, XXIII (Jan. 1949), 68-75.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in *Saint-Lô* (American Forces in Action Series [Washington, 1946]), 125.



PART THREE

ORLEANS AND THE  
THIRD COMING  
OF THE AMERICANS



# 7

## War and Liberation

Jeanne d'Arc was born in Domrémy, escorted Charles VII to Reims for his coronation, and was tried and burned at Rouen. But she is best known as the Maid of Orléans. It was at Orléans that she established herself as a leader and as restorer of the French spirit in awakening effective resistance against English and Burgundian invaders at whose hands France had been suffering for so many years.

Orléans had suffered siege before—most notably in successfully defying Attila and the Huns in 451, until the arrival of Roman and Visigoth armies caused the “Scourge of God” to lift his siege and retreat toward the plains of Châlons.

But in the spring of 1429 there seemed to be little prospect of the arrival of anyone to relieve the siege. The English and Burgundians had virtually surrounded the city with a series of fortifications known as bastilles. These were closest together on the north, but the entry to the city from the south, across the Loire River, was effectively blocked by the English seizure of the strongly fortified bridgehead comprising a drawbridge which extended from an island near the south bank of the river guarded by pairs of heavily defended towers, known as the *Tourelles*. This seems to have been one of the first siege operations in which artillery played a significant part.

The river had added to the difficulties of the besiegers' attempt to shut off all supplies for the city, but gradually the blockade was becoming complete. After the defeat of a relief army of 4,000 French and Scotsmen by 1,600 English in February 1429 the situation seemed hopeless for the *Orléannais*. They offered to surrender the city to the Duke of Burgundy, but the English regent, the Duke

of Bedford, would not permit it. He looked forward to an early and inevitable surrender to himself.

Meanwhile the weak dauphin, Charles VII, remaining passively at Chinon with a remnant of his court, despaired of continuing the war or winning his crown.

It was on this hopeless scene that the young peasant girl from Lorraine entered. Miraculously winning the audience and then the support of incredulous elders, she made her way to the king and convinced the court of her worthiness to go to the rescue of Orléans.

On April 25 Jeanne set out with a convey of wagons and a herd of cattle for the relief of the near-starving city. Leaving the command of the units and movements of troops and supplies to the military captains, she devoted herself to moral discipline, encouragement, and the holding of all concerned to the main objectives. In this campaign she wanted to march straight up the north bank of the river and into Orléans between the English siege fortresses. But her military commanders thought it best to keep the river between themselves and the main English forces. When they arrived opposite Orléans, a boat brought Dunois, Bastard of Orléans, and other captains of the city across the river to confer with the leaders of the convoy. Their plan was to have boats go upstream from Orléans and meet the convoy at Chécy, where transloading could be done safely, but a contrary wind promised to defeat such an effort. Rebuking them for not having followed the north bank of the river, where boats would not be needed, Jeanne persuaded them to go on to Chécy in spite of their doubts, and the critical relief mission was accomplished. Until that was done she refused pleas to enter the city where by now the population was awaiting her arrival in lively anticipation. Then on the evening of April 29, she ferried across the river. She and her party made their way between the English positions and entered the city by the western gate. Though darkness was falling, crowds of people, many carrying torches, turned out to greet her. First she went to the cathedral, where *Te Deum* was chanted, and then across the city to the house of Jacques Boucher, treasurer to the Duke of Orléans, where she lodged while in the city.

On May 1 a second convoy of provisions from Blois, this time coming along the north bank of the river as Jeanne had directed, arrived. Defiant of English taunts, she escorted the long wagon train safely between the English bastilles and into the city, while English soldiers cowered feebly behind their defenses. Now both sides were agreed that this girl was in possession of supernatural powers, the French believing that she truly was an angel of heaven, while the English were as sure that she was a witch of the devil.

Jeanne d'Arc's first taste of battle came three days later. On that day a French force, without the knowledge of the Maid, had sallied forth to attack the English bastille of Saint-Loup. Jeanne was aroused

from a nap to find that the French attack was being defeated. Quickly she mounted her horse and dashed toward the scene of action. Encountering disheartened and frightened Frenchmen fleeing back to the city, she turned them about and urged them back to the fight. Other forces moved quickly to pin down English garrisons in the other strongholds, and soon the first break in the ring of English forts had been achieved.

Now all that remained of clearing the south river bank and re-establishing firm connections between the city and the outside were the stoutly defended Tourelles towers which dominated the bridge. The climactic attack against the bridgehead ramparts came on May 7. After hearing mass and attending confession, at Jeanne's insistence, the French soldiers crossed the river in boats and made for the walls surrounding the outer towers. Jeanne herself jumped to the ditch and raised the first scaling ladder against the wall. But as she climbed up, an arrow caught her between neck and shoulder. She fell from the ladder, and narrowly escaping capture, was carried to the rear. Now the whole attack seemed to go awry, and once more the French were at the point of giving up. But after a brief rest the Maid recovered her strength and, promising victory, went forward. A Biscayan soldier carried her banner up to the wall, and when it touched, scaling ladders went up and all along the line Frenchmen scrambled up. By this time French troops remaining in the city had been able to improvise a narrow passage over the destroyed bridge, and now they came up from the rear. Finally the English lost their leader when a cannonball crashed through the drawbridge as he was crossing it and threw him into the river where he drowned.

At eight o'clock that evening Jeanne d'Arc triumphantly re-entered Orléans while church bells rang and bonfires blazed through the city in celebration. English garrisons still remained in the bastilles on the north side of the city, but the next day, Sunday, while Jeanne enjoined the French to refrain from attacking, they departed peaceably.

The raising of the siege of Orléans was a triumph which Sir Edward Creasy included among his *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, in which he went so far as to say, "It may be asserted without exaggeration, that the future career of every nation was involved in the result of the struggle, by which the unconscious heroine of France, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, rescued her country from becoming a second Ireland under the yoke of the triumphant English."

Now, for more than half a millennium, May 7 and 8—dates which later coincided with V-E Day and the end of World War II in Europe—have been days of celebration in Orléans. The annual celebration arose as a continuation of a spontaneous ceremony in honor

of Saint Euvetius (Bishop of Orléans from about 355 to 385) and Saint Aignan (Bishop of Orléans from 385 to 453, who helped to force Attila and the Huns to raise their siege of the city in 451), in which Jeanne d'Arc joined with soldiers, leaders, and people. After a ceremony at the cathedral on that occasion, a procession formed, and everyone marched, singing hymns, to the church of St. Paul, near the Blucher house, where Jeanne gave thanks for the deliverance of the city. Soon this became an annual solemn festival of the church. Interrupted during the religious troubles of the sixteenth century, and again during the French Revolution, from 1792 until restored by Napoleon in 1804, the celebration continued year after year in much the same way. Then in 1907 the French government ordered a separation of the religious and civil elements of the celebration. But in 1921, after the canonization of Saint Joan, the French parliament voted unanimously to make the festival of May 8 a national holiday. Now it is one of the gayest festivals of the year, with social, religious, civil, and military aspects.

Orléans again became a pivot for French resistance to foreign invasion in 1870, though the outcome then was not as fortunate as it had been on previous occasions. After Napoleon III's disaster at Sedan on September 1, 1870, a group of determined leaders in Paris, headed by Jules Favre, Jules Ferry, and Léon Gambetta, proclaimed the overthrow of the Second Empire, and made plans to continue the struggle against the Germans under provisional republican auspices. Gambetta escaped besieged Paris by balloon and reached Tours on October 9. Miraculously he was able to raise a new "Army of the Loire" in the provinces. But already the Germans were on the march toward Orléans, and after breaking through a bitterly contested defense, they entered the city on October 11. Yet in less than a month the newly constituted Army of the Loire, under the command of d'Aurelle de Paladine, was on the move. It met and defeated the Germans at Coulmiers on November 9, and retook Orléans the next day. This was an auspicious beginning for this improvised army in its projected relief of Paris. But the surrender on October 27 of the army which had been penned up in Metz had freed the forces of the Prussian Prince Frederick Charles to descend on the Loire. The Germans entered Orléans again on the night of December 4-5. Still Gambetta refused to give up. He raised yet another new army of the Loire for one last effort, but it was defeated at LeMans on January 12, 1871. An armistice was signed a little over two weeks later at Versailles. German troops remained in Orléans until March 16, 1871, and in eastern France until September 1873, when they evacuated after the surprisingly rapid payment of the five-billion franc indemnity which had been assessed against France.

Although Orleans was spared enemy occupation and liberation during World War I, its central location on the Loire, the important railway center of Les Aubrais, a mile to the north, and its military casernes, put it in the midst of military activities in support of the war effort. Orléans also was spared occupation by American troops at that time, though people of Orléans had more than a passing acquaintance with American soldiers, for it lay on the main line of communications for the American Expeditionary Force, and many installations of the American Services of Supply were in nearby cities and towns. In making plans for organizing his line of communication General Pershing had cabled to the War Department in July 1917: "Only available ports as already reported are those on Loire and Gironde Rivers and La Pallice-Rochelle all of which are also commercial ports. Main railroad lines leading northeasterly pass through district favorable for location supply depots embraced by Orléans, Bourges, Montargis, and Nevers."<sup>1</sup>

Headquarters of the Services of Supply of the AEF was established at Tours, about seventy-five miles southwest, down the Loire, from Orléans, and the headquarters for the Intermediate Section was at Nevers, about the same distance southeast, up the Loire, from Orléans. American installations and activities in this general area included a reclassification camp at Blois; ordnance school, shops and depot, a field bakery, and the central personnel records office for the AEF at Bourges; a gas-mask salvage depot at Châteauroux; a chemical-warfare training center at Chinon; a heavy-artillery tractor school at Gien; a general intermediate depot, largest in the AEF, including a refrigeration and ice-making plant, coffee roasting plant, bakery, coal and gasoline storage, central baggage office, remount depot, veterinary hospital, railway construction materials, and general supplies at Gièvres; an aviation instruction center comprising twelve airfields, a quartermaster depot, ammunition storage depot, and a prisoner-of-war enclosure at Issoudun; the largest ordnance repair shop in the AEF at Mehun-sur-Yèvre; an aviation production center and base depot and motor transport repair shop and depot at Romorantin; a remount depot at Selles-sur-Cher; a tank center at Neuvy; a replacement depot at Saint Aignan. All this gave to the *Orléanais* a preview of what they would see in a somewhat different way a generation later.

War in all its violence came again to Orléans in 1940. In May refugees from Belgium and northern and eastern France began streaming through Orléans to seek refuge south of the Loire. Their numbers increased with the steady advance of the German forces toward Paris. The French government left Paris on June 10 and moved to Tours and neighboring towns of the Loire valley. On the

<sup>1</sup> Copy in *U. S. Army in the World War 1917-1919* (Washington, 1948), III, 243.

fourteenth the Germans occupied Paris, and the French government moved to Bordeaux. Mussolini, who, on June 10, had declared war on an already prostrate France, sent his bombers to Orléans on the night of June 14-15. The first bombs fell at 2:55 A.M., and destroyed several buildings and started some fires near the center of the city. About four o'clock in the afternoon, when the streets and bridges were crowded with refugees who were trying to get across the Loire ahead of the rapidly approaching German armies, low-flying German planes attacked. Bombing continued intermittently all through the night. By the next morning, Sunday, June 16, much of the city was in flames. The house of Jacques Boucher, where Jeanne d'Arc had stayed, the Jeanne d'Arc Museum, the Historical Museum in the house of Diane de Poitiers, the church of St. Paul, the municipal archives building—all were nearly completely destroyed, and shops, and hotels around Place du Martroi and along Rue Bannier, Rue Royale, Place du Vieux-Marché, and adjacent streets especially were destroyed or heavily damaged.

The Germans entered the city shortly after noon that Sunday. French forces put up a sharp but hopeless battle to prevent their crossing of the river, but by the next morning it was all over. It was a grim Monday morning for Orléans. Its heart burned out, its streets filled with rubble, unburied dead, and enemy soldiers, the city presented a sad spectacle in the after-battle calm. Now began four long years of enemy occupation. On that same July 17, with German divisions pushing southward of the Loire, the newly organized French government of Marshal Henri Pétain asked for an armistice. Five days later it signed the surrender terms, and threw itself on the mercy of the merciless Nazis.

Many patriotic Frenchmen regard this as the greatest humiliation to the nation—not the military defeat, but the armistice—the coming to terms with Hitler. But Winston Churchill, whose inspiring words did so much to brace the British in their defiance during those dark hours, also had some inspiring words for the French at the dismal moment of surrender: "Good night, then: sleep to gather strength for the morning. For the morning will come. Brightly will it shine on the brave and true, kindly upon all who suffer for the cause, glorious upon the tombs of heroes. Thus will shine the dawn. *Vive la France!*"

Writing a preface to a picture album whose title might be translated *Orléans, Murdered and Freed 1940-1944*, published in December 1945, Roger Secrétain expressed a strong determination not to let those years of war and occupation be forgotten. "Now we have the good fortune to be able to forget," he wrote. "The good fortune, if not the right. And when it is said that it is necessary to struggle against forgetting a painful past, it is not so much for evoking a struggle against the always possible resurrection of germanism, it is



against our own softness and our unconcern. It is against our ingratitude, for it is necessary to learn liberty before defending it."

Then he continues:

"But then," you say, "They must help us not forget! You others, men of letters, journalists, historians, moralists, recall to the citizens of the murdered towns the terrible adventure from which now they must protect their descendants. Restore for us the feelings of 1940. Recall for us the insulting honor of those young conquerors, in the landscape of ruins where we breathed, with the odor of fire, our disarray and our shame. Recall for us the dismal years: '41, '42, '43, the oppression incessantly weighing down, the restrictions on bread, and also on bread for the nourishment of our souls, as Peguy's Jeanne d'Arc said. Recall for us the requisitions and the fines; recall for us the organized pillage and the systematic degradation of a whole nation. Recall for us the cold offensiveness of these masters who confused victory with superiority. Recall for us the pale mornings, the hour when the gray car would stop in front of certain doors, the hour of the fusillades, while the laconic notice of executions appeared, with black borders, in the strangled press. . . . Recall for us the bad Frenchmen who offered to the enemy the complaisance of citizens without character or the venal love of women without dignity. When was this not treason! Evoke without tiring, the anguish of the night alerts, the sinister scenes of the bombardments, the slow procession of the victims. But, at the same time, describe the long, admirable route of Hope, the perilous, clandestine resistance effort, and then the national insurrection. . . ."

During three years of occupation Orléans lived in relative peace, though it was a tense and restrictive existence. But as the Allies built up their strength for a comeback, they began to turn their attention toward Orléans as the site of an important German military headquarters and of major supply activities. In May 1943 American bombers attacked for the first time the area around the railway station.

Another year passed without air raids—until May 11, 1944. About two P.M. that day a group of high-flying American bombers came over from the northwest. German pursuit planes gave chase. One American plane was hit. It circled back over the city and jettisoned four bombs. One of its engines came crashing down amidst the ruins near the post office. But the bombs struck houses and shops along Rue Carmes and Rue d'Illiers. It took thirty-six hours to recover the victims. Forty-seven people were killed and a score injured.

The weeks that followed recalled, on a more terrible scale, the days of June 1940. Orléans became "a city twice martyred." Frequent alerts sent German soldiers and French citizens alike scrambling for cover. Shortly after midnight on the night of May 19-20 some planes flew over to encircle the city with flares. Then waves of heavy bombers came in to concentrate the whole weight of their explosives on the big railway center at Les Aubrais, about a mile north of the main part of the city. In seventeen minutes the station

and all the area surrounding it were utterly devastated. An area of over six square miles between the suburb of Bannier and the station, and from Groues to Fleury, were laid waste. Bomb craters around the marshaling yards were so dense that one hardly could be found that was not touching another. A detachment of German troops had just boarded a train when the sirens sounded. They took refuge in a tunnel by the station, and there they died to a man. But 120 French civilians also died that night, and many more were injured. Although scores of innocent Frenchmen—men, women, and children—were killed, this raid at Orléans seems to have indicated a different order of responsibility from such attacks as those on Saint-Lô. Orléans and its suburbs were undeniably an important transportation center, an important German headquarters was in the city, and a German operational airfield was nearby. Moreover a real effort was made on this occasion, including the use of flares, to concentrate on an important military objective, the railway center, and it was an effort which met with remarkable success.

Three nights later, about midnight, the air-raid sirens again sent people hurrying to shelters. The all clear sounded within an hour, but then at 2:15 A.M. the sirens sounded once more, and within minutes flares were lighting up the sky again. The attacking bombers concentrated most of their bombs on the Orléans station, but this time bombs fell all over the city. One bomb made a direct hit on a bomb shelter, and killed thirty-two people. Another struck a tower of the cathedral and badly damaged it. Others fell on the Place du Martroi, in the center of the city—and completely destroyed the German *Kommandatura*. In this raid 156 French civilians were killed, 50 injured, and 500 left homeless. Gas, water, and electricity were cut off.

The population, near panic, resorted to evacuating the city each evening in order to escape possible further night raids. For three months most of the population took to the country and surrounding villages each evening. Hundreds of persons who could find no place to stay in the overcrowded suburbs slept under the stars along the Loire, between Saint-Loup and Saint Jean-de-Braye, or in the middle of fields.

On June 8 American planes destroyed the railway bridge over the Loire as part of their campaign of "isolating the battlefront" in Normandy, and in their last major raid on June 11 they struck Les Aubrais again.

At last, after years of shattered hopes for Frenchmen, and weeks of bitter hedgerow fighting for Americans, General Patton and his Third Army were on the way toward Orléans in August 1944. The so-called Paris-Orléans gap, the plain which narrows here between the Seine and the Loire rivers, and through which major railways and highways converge, had been a major

objective of the OVERLORD operation from the outset. Now in mid-August Patton's Third Army, operational only since August 1, was racing in three columns, spread over a seventy-mile front, toward that objective. "With his main forces trapped and broken in Normandy, the enemy had no means of checking the Third Army drive, the brilliant rapidity of which was perhaps the most spectacular ever seen in modern mobile warfare. The three corps, each spearheaded by an armored division, raced headlong toward Paris and the Seine with an impetus and spirit characteristic of their leader, at once guarding the flank of the armies to the north and seeking fresh objectives of their own."<sup>2</sup>

It is probable that the Third Army was no more effective in accomplishing its assigned tasks than were its sister United States armies in Europe, but it went about it with more fanfare. GI's swore at Patton's regulations and restrictions, but they swelled with pride in identifying themselves with his army. It is curious how soldiers writing home from the other armies seldom mentioned their army commanders' names, and those names were not very frequently on the tongues of hometown discussants. But in writing or speaking of the Third Army, it almost always was *Patton's Third Army*. Often it simply would be reduced to an expression that "Johnnie is with Patton in France." Many are convinced that the personal idiosyncrasies of General Patton—the pearl-handled pistols, tight breeches, special belt, and polished helmet liner; the obscene expressions and dramatic actions—which made him such a colorful character were in fact studied theatrics calculated to accomplish the very results they achieved—tremendous pride, esprit de corps, and determination in his army. All agreed that he was a masterful leader, an able tactician, and an aggressive fighter. Sometimes men would say, "Yes, he's 'Old Blood and Guts' all right; our blood and his guts." But they never hesitated to go out and spill blood for him.

Back in England, during the weeks of training before the Normandy invasion, General Patton had set down some of his ideas on warfare in a series of directives and letters of instruction to the units then assigned to his Third Army. Excerpts from a letter of April 3, 1944, suggest something of his way of thinking:

#### I. General

1. You will not simply mimeograph this and call it a day. You are responsible that these usages become habitual in your command.

#### II. Discipline

1. There is only one sort of discipline—perfect discipline. Men cannot have good battle discipline and poor administrative discipline.

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<sup>2</sup> Report by the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Europe of the Allied Expeditionary Force 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945 (Washington, 1946), 47.

6. One of the primary purposes of discipline is to produce alertness. A man who is so lethargic that he fails to salute will fall an easy victim to an enemy.

7. Combat experience has proven that ceremonies, such as formal guard mounts, formal retreat formations, and regular and supervised reveille formations are a great help and, in some cases, essential to prepare men and officers for battle, to give them that perfect discipline, that smartness of appearance, that alertness without which battles cannot be won.

. . . . .

9. Officers are always on duty and their duty extends to every individual, junior to themselves, in the U. S. Army—not only to members of their own organization.

. . . . .

### III. *Tactical Usages*

1. (2) There is only one tactical principle which is not subject to change. It is: "To use the means at hand to inflict the maximum amount of wounds, death, and destruction on the enemy in the minimum time."

. . . . .

(8) The larger the force and the more violence you use in an attack, whether it be men, tanks, or ammunition, the smaller will be your proportional losses.

. . . . .

(10) Our mortars and our artillery are superb weapons when they are firing. When silent, they are junk—see that they fire!

b. (1) Use roads to march on, fields to fight on.

. . . . .

(6) The effect of mines is largely mental. Not over 10 percent of our casualties come from them. When they are encountered they must be passed through or around. There are not enough mines in the world to cover the whole country. It is cheaper to make a detour than to search; however, the engineers should start clearing the straight road while the advance elements continue via the detour. See that all types of troops have mine detectors and know how to use them. You *must*—repeat—must get through!

(7) Never permit a unit to dig in until the final objective is reached, then dig, wire, and mine.

. . . . .

(10) In battle, small forces— platoons, companies, and even battalions, can do one of three things—go forward, halt or run. If they halt or run, they will be an even easier target. Therefore, they must go forward. . . .

#### 2. *Infantry*

a. Infantry must move in order to close with the enemy. It must shoot in order to move. When physical targets are not visible, the fire of all infantry weapons must search the area probably occupied by enemy. Use marching fire. It reduces the accuracy of his fire and increases our confidence. Shoot short. Ricochets make nastier sounds, and wounds. To halt under fire is folly. To halt under fire and not fire back is suicide. Move forward out of fire. Officers must set the example.

#### 3. *Armor*

There is no such thing as "tank country" in the restrictive sense.

Some types of country are better than others, but tanks have and can operate anywhere.

General Patton gave a more colorful expression of some of his views in an address which he gave to a number of the units of his command gathered on an English hillside shortly before his army headquarters crossed the channel and went into action. The speech has become a classic among veterans of the Third Army.

General Patton arose and stepped swiftly to the microphone. The men shot to their feet and stood silently. Patton surveyed the sea of brown grimly—"Be seated." The words were not a request but a sharp command. Then his voice rose high and clear:

"Men—this stuff some sources sling around about America wanting out of the war, not wanting to fight, is a lot of bull. Americans love to fight, traditionally. All real Americans love the sting and clash of battle. When you here, every man Jack of you, were kids, you all admired the champion marble player, the fastest runner, the handiest kid with his fists, the Big League ball players, the All-American football players. Americans love a winner. Americans will not tolerate a loser. Americans despise cowards. Americans play to win all the time and every time. I wouldn't give a hoot in hell for a man who lost and laughed. That's why Americans have never lost nor will ever lose a war, for the very thought of losing is hateful to an American.

The General paused and looked over the crowd. "You are not all going to die," he said slowly. "Only two per cent of you right here today would die in a major battle. Death must not be feared. Death, in time, comes to all. Yes, every man is scared in his first battle. If he says he isn't he's a goddam liar. Some men are cowards, yes, but they fight just the same or get hell slammed out of them watching men fight who are just as scared as they are. The real hero is the man who fights even though he is scared. Some get over their fright in a minute under fire—for others it takes an hour—for some it takes days, but the real duty is to his country and to his manhood. All through your army careers, you men have bitched about what you call "chicken drill." That, like everything else in the army, is for a definite purpose—OBEDIENCE TO ORDERS AND TO CREATE CONSTANT ALERTNESS. This must be bred into every man. I don't give a damn for a man who is not always on his toes. You men are veterans or you wouldn't be here. You are ready for what is to come. A man, to continue breathing, must be alert at all times. If not, some day some German sonofabitch will sneak up behind him and beat him to death."

Patton's grim expression remained unchanged. "There are 400 neatly marked graves somewhere in Sicily" he roared, "all because one man went to sleep on the job." He paused and the men grew silent. "But they are German graves." He continued softly, "For we caught the bastard asleep before his officers did." The General grasped the microphone tightly, his jaw outthrust. "An Army is a team. Lives, sleeps, eats and fights as a team. This individual heroic stuff is a lot of bull. The bilious bastards who write that kind of stuff don't know any thing about real fighting under fire." This was Patton as the men had imagined him. He was in rare form. He hadn't let them down. He was all he was cracked up to be. He had it.

"We have the best food, the finest equipment, the best spirit, and the best fighting men in the world." Patton bellowed. The men roared. Then

the General lowered his head and shook it pensively. Suddenly he snapped erect, faced the men belligerently, "Why by God," he thundered, "I actually pity those sonofabitches we're going up against. By God, I do." The men clapped and howled in glee. There would be many a barracks tale about the Old Man's choice phrases. They would become part and parcel of Third Army history and become the bible of their slang.

"My men don't surrender," Patton went on. "I don't want to hear of any soldier under my command being captured unless he's been hit. Even if you are hit, you can still fight. That's not just bull, either. The kind of man I want under me is the lieutenant who, in Libya, with a slug in his chest, jerked off his helmet, swept the gun aside with one hand and busted hell out of the Boche with it. He then jumped on the gun and went out and killed another German before he knew what the hell was coming off. All the time this man had a bullet through his lung. *There was a man!*"

"All the real heroes are not storybook combat fighters either. Every single man in the Army plays a vital part. Don't ever let down, thinking your role unimportant. Every man has a job to do. Every man is a link in the great chain. What if every truck driver decided that he didn't like the whine of those shells overhead, turned yellow and jumped headlong into the ditch? This bird could say to himself, 'Hell—they won't miss me—just one guy in millions!' What if every man thought that? Where in the hell would we be now? What would our country, our loved ones, our homes, even the world, be? No—Thank God Americans don't think like that. Every man does his job. Every man serves the whole. Every department, every unit, is important, in the vast scheme of this war. The Ordnance men are needed to supply the guns and machinery of war to keep us rolling. The quartermaster to bring up food and clothes, for where we're going there isn't a hell of a lot to steal. Every damn last man in the mess hall, even the one who heats the water to keep us from getting the GI's, has a job to do."

Patton paused and half turned to the officers behind him. "Even the Chaplain," he said whimsically, "is important, for if we got killed and he wasn't there to bury us, we'd all go to hell. Each man must not think only of himself but of his buddy fighting beside him. We don't want yellow cowards in this Army. They should be killed off like rats. If not, they will go back home after the war and breed more cowards."

. . . . .

"One of the bravest men I ever knew was in the African campaign, one fellow I saw on top of a telegraph pole in the midst of furious fire while we were plowing toward Tunis. I stopped and asked what the hell he was doing up there at that time. He answered, 'Fixing the wire, Sir.'"

"Isn't it a little unhealthy right now?" I asked.

"Yes sir, but this goddam wire's got to be fixed."

"There was a real soldier. There was a man who devoted all he had to his duty, no matter how great the odds, no matter how seemingly insignificant his duty might appear at the time. You should have seen those trucks on the road to Bages. The drivers were magnificent. All day and all night they rolled over those sonofabitchin' roads, never stopping, never faltering from their course, with shells bursting around them all the time. We got through on good old American guts. Many of these men drove over forty consecutive hours. These men weren't combat men, but they were soldiers with a job to do. They did it—and in a whale of a way they did it. They were part of a team. Without them the fight would have been lost. All the links in the chain pulled together

and that chain became unbreakable."

The General paused, staring challengingly out over the silent sea of men. One could have heard a pin drop anywhere on that vast hillside. The only sound was the stirring of the breeze in the leaves of bordering trees and the busy chirping of birds in the branches at the General's left.

"Don't forget," Patton barked, "you don't know I'm here. No word for that fact is to be mentioned in any letters. The world is not supposed to know what the hell became of me. I'm not supposed to be commanding this army, I'm not even supposed to be in England. Let THE FIRST BASTARDS TO FIND OUT BE THE GODDAM GERMANS. Some day I want them to raise up on their hind legs and howl 'Jesus Christ! It's the goddam Third Army and that sonofabitch Patton again.'"

"We want to go the hell over there," Patton continued. "We want to go home. We want this thing over with. But you can't win a war lying down. The quicker we clean up this goddam mess, the quicker we can take a jaunt against the Japs and clean their nest out too before the damned Marines get all the credit."

Patton went on more quietly. "Sure we all want to be home. We want this thing over with. The quickest way to get it over is to get the bastards. The quicker they are whipped the quicker we go home. The shortest way home is through Berlin. When a man is lying in a shell hole, if he just stays there all day, a Boche will get him eventually, and the hell with that idea. The hell with taking it. My men don't dig foxholes; I don't want them to. Foxholes only slow up an offensive. Keep moving. And don't give the enemy time to dig one. We'll win this war but we'll win it only by fighting and by showing the Germans we've got more guts than they have!"

His eagle-like eyes swept over the hillside. "There's one great thing you men will all be able to say when you go home," he said tersely. "You may all thank God for it. Thank God that at least thirty years from now when you are sitting around the fireside with your grandson on your knees and he asks you what you did in the great war, you won't have to cough and say, 'I shoveled manure in Louisiana.'"

For men who had been devoting a lifetime to tense struggle in the hedgerows and sunken lanes of Normandy, this was an entirely new war. The morale of the infantryman was soaring. For the moment he found himself riding rather than walking; he was moving rapidly forward, and this would imply to him large-scale victories, and he was out of immediate contact with the enemy. Now in less than a day veteran units were advancing farther than they had been able to go in more than a month in the hedgerows. For these soldiers this was a refreshing trip. Where previously they had seen only ghost towns of ruined bare walls, now they passed through whole towns humming with peaceful activity. For the first time these men saw French shops open for business. Attractive farms replaced the squalor and death that had been Normandy. At last the hedgerows were no more in this open country of central France. Here great fields, which only a few weeks earlier had yielded their important crops of wheat, would rival those of Ohio, Indiana, or Nebraska. These fertile plains appeared to be excellent tank country,

but the productive farms also gave the impression that in spite of war people in this area were not going hungry.

The trip was like a triumphal procession all the way. Enthusiastic people lined the streets at every village, and often in between. They called, waved, tossed fruit and flowers. A minute's delay of a vehicle would bring cheering crowds surging around it, and cider and wine—including champagne—would begin to flow. Children would crowd the streets crying "Cigarette pour papa . . . chocolat, chocolat," and then they would scramble for packs of caramel candy from K rations or for the concentrated chocolate bars of D rations.

After a detour of several days to the Mortain area to help check the ill-fated German counteroffensive toward Avranches and the sea, the 35th Division had on August 14 rejoined the Third Army east of LeMans—a city always remembered by the men for its sidewalk cafes and crowds of people. Here the 35th became the right flank division for the XII Corps, the right (south) corps of the Third Army, while the 4th Armored Division moved out to spearhead the corps' drive to the east. Trusting the protection of its exposed southern flank to the momentum of its forward movement, the support of tactical aviation, and occasional roadblocks and security detachments provided by the 3rd Battalion, 134th Infantry, along the Loire, the Third Army kept rolling along. Disorganized German columns came under the fire of pursuing tanks and supporting aircraft, and the roadside was strewn with overturned and burned German vehicles. Now and then a battalion or a regiment would be dispatched to attack a German garrison holding out somewhere off the main route of advance. Everywhere local detachments of the FFI formed to help the Americans and to root out Germans in areas bypassed by the speeding columns.

Meanwhile the people in Orléans were becoming restive. Rapid as it was, the advance of the Third Army was not fast enough to keep up with the rumors and false hopes. On August 8 a rumor spread through Orléans that the Americans had arrived at Beaugency, about seventeen miles southwest, down the Loire, from Orléans. The movement of German trucks, loaded with headquarters equipment, papers, and foodstuffs, seemed to confirm the news. But it developed that the news was premature, and a few days later officers of the German *Kommandatura* and of the Gestapo who had taken refuge outside the city returned. During the next week Orléans seemed a city near death, as many people who had been going to the country to escape possible night air attacks now remained away throughout the day. Stores remained closed. Utilities were not working.

East of LeMans a special task force made up of the 137th Infantry, 737th Tank Battalion, and artillery, tank destroyer, reconnaissance, and other elements from the 35th Division, together with



Combat Command A of the 4th Armored Division, formed under the command of Brig. Gen. Edmund Sebree, assistant division commander of the 35th, on August 15 for the dash to Orléans. The task force began rolling down the broad, smooth highway shortly before noon. When the column ran into German resistance in the Bois de Bucy, between Couliniers and Ormes, the infantryman deployed to the attack. This was the only serious opposition that they encountered, and it was short-lived. Quickly they moved into Ormes, where they seized a big German warehouse completely stocked with new kitchen equipment and a large supply of motor fuel, and then turned southeast for the last five miles to the city of Jeanne d'Arc.

The Germans in Orléans had been alerted to the approach of the Americans—surely the brief fighting in the Bois de Bucy had attracted their attention. The Germans organized their defenses, dense with machine guns and direct-fire artillery, along the northwest approaches to the city from the suburb of Madeleine across the Boulevard de Châteaudun to St. Jean. About ten A.M. on August 16 American columns approached from Ormes. But the 137th Infantry left the Châteaudun highway, moved across country to the east of the main Paris road. Thus bypassing the German defenses they moved into the city by Rue des Murlins and Rue du Faubourg Bannier to Place Gambetta, site of the ancient main northern gate. Frenchmen went out to guide the Americans into the city and to point out to them the location of German positions. People ran to the streets to greet the liberators. By one P.M. the oncoming infantrymen were in possession of the northwest part of the city. At 2:30 P.M. the city hall was in their hands. At four P.M. the Commissioner of the Republic, representing the de Gaulle Provisional Government, arrived to take possession of the prefecture. Crowds in the street began singing the "Marseillaise." In spite of the advance warning of cannonades and skirmishes on the outskirts, the final rush of Task Force Sebree still caught a number of Germans by surprise. Soldiers entering the German *Kommandatura* found soup and stew uneaten on the dinner table and warm soapy water in the bathtub. A Luftwaffe pilot, unaware that the city was in American hands, attempted to land at the airfield north of the city; he was shot down as he attempted a last-minute getaway.

During the night the Americans and Frenchmen searched out remaining groups of Germans, and by morning the city was free—though occasional artillery shells and bursts of machine-gun fire came from across the river.

At ten A.M. on August 17 the whole city joined in a great celebration. Wild, happy throngs marched through the streets carrying flags of the Allied nations. A parade moved from the Place Albert I, near the railroad station, down Rue de la République to Place du Martroi. The commissioner introduced General Sebree and members

of his staff, and announced his determination to restore normal life to the city. A tremendous crowd responded enthusiastically. Then they all sang the "Marseillaise" and "March Lorraine," the battle song of the Free French, and tossed flowers on the statue of Jeanne d'Arc.

The visit of General Charles de Gaulle to Orléans on September 18 was the occasion for another jubilant celebration by the thousands of citizens who gathered to greet him.

Liberation released the emotions of patriots who had been chafing under four years of German occupation. Not only did this manifest itself in the great celebrations, but also in the wrath now loosed against Frenchmen who had collaborated with the Germans. Swastikas and crude drawings of Hitler on a scaffold appeared on the gates of collaborators' homes. Young women who had kept company with German soldiers received the mark of disgrace which became common for their kind all across France—shaved heads.

After the American ground forces passed on to the east, continuing their race across France, several American air units moved into the Orléans area. First, in late August and early September, transport planes came in to deliver foodstuffs for the relief of Paris (liberated on August 25) and to relay supplies to the onrushing armies. Then the 98th Bombardment Wing, medium bombers, was based in the area in September and October. In April 1945 the 53rd Troop Carrier Wing came in.

A decade later, other American army units had moved into the Orléans area, while the city still worked at repairing the bomb damage of 1940 and 1944. It takes a long time to recover from bombings which claimed 1,108 buildings totally destroyed and 3,582 partially destroyed, and many of the city's old landmarks, including the cathedral, still bear the marks of the war. A citation for the Croix de Guerre with Palm, presented to the city in 1948, now hangs in the city hall—a splendid Renaissance palace built in the middle of the sixteenth century. The citation notes that 947 inhabitants of Orléans were killed during the war, and 494 were injured. In addition 244 men from Orléans were deported to Germany, of whom 92 never came back.

## 8

### The Return of the American Army

In order to provide port facilities for civil and military needs in the American occupation zone of Germany after the conclusion of World War II hostilities, the United States had arranged for an enclave including Bremen and Bremerhaven to be set aside under American control, and for goods to move from those ports southward across the British zone to Hesse. The line of communication connecting Bremerhaven with American installations in southwest Germany ran through Bremen-Hanover-Kassel to Frankfurt. Running generally north and south, this line of communication was parallel to the boundary of the Soviet zone, and thus it lay athwart the route of any major attack which might come from East Germany. At Kassel this line of communication was within twenty miles of Soviet-occupied Thuringia.

For purposes of the occupation this had seemed a logical and expedient arrangement. The United States did not have to depend upon the port and transportation facilities of any other country, and the costs involved were borne by German mark funds provided under the occupation statutes. Then the Russian blockade of Berlin in 1948 opened the eyes of everyone concerned to the reality of the danger of a Communist attack. If this needed any further emphasis the Communist attack in Korea provided it. Now security had to supersede economy and convenience in logistical thinking, and friends had to be called upon to make other facilities available.

Under the stimulus of the Berlin blockade, the Logistics Division of the European Command, the top United States military headquarters in Europe, in 1948 and early 1949 set about investigating the possible establishment of a line of communication across France. As soon as the Joint Chiefs of Staff had approved, the European Command in November 1949 appointed a team headed by Colonel

Mason J. Young to survey the proposed route and to meet with French military representatives to determine what installations, facilities, and services would be required. Before the end of January 1950 the team tentatively selected, in agreement with French authorities, facilities and storage sites in or near the port areas of Bordeaux, Rochefort, La Rochelle, and La Pallice, and forward storage areas at Fontainebleau, Verdun, and Metz. The planned route extended for nearly six hundred miles, by road, from Bordeaux and La Pallice on the southeast coast northeast across France to the Saar.

There remained the matter of concluding an agreement with the French government. This introduced a situation almost without precedent in recent international military affairs: negotiations for the army of one nation to set up a complete line of communication across the territory of another fully sovereign, friendly state in peacetime. It was to be expected that the strong Communist elements in France would exploit the novelty fully in order to show that the United States was establishing military bases in France in preparation for war and in violation of French sovereignty. For this reason it was essential that the negotiations proceed most carefully and diplomatically. Both sides were anxious to avoid political repercussions in France, to limit the inflationary pressures resulting from large-scale local spending which might dislocate elements of the French economy, and to discourage situations which might lead to ill feeling between the local civilian population and the American troops which soon would be arriving. In addition the Americans were anxious for the French to assume a major share of the costs of the line of communication.

By the end of February 1950 United States Army representatives had completed preliminary military discussions with French officers, and the stage was set for the opening of diplomatic negotiations. The State Department designated Charles E. Bohlen, minister of the embassy in Paris, to conduct the negotiations. Eleven months after the first military discussions on the subject, and five months after the opening of diplomatic negotiations, on November 6, 1950, Ambassador David Bruce of the United States and Alexandre Parodi, secretary-general of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, signed the agreement.

The basic agreement provided very simply that a line of communication would be established from the La Pallice-Bordeaux area to the German frontier over which the principal means of movement would be by railway. Procedures for the establishment and operation of the line of communication were to be worked out by the military authorities of the two countries. The agreement was to remain in effect for five years, and then would be renewed automatically unless terminated by six months' advance notice by one

of the parties. Three annexes provided for the continuation of an agreement of 1948 covering the legal status of troops to be stationed in France, provided that American forces might install and operate radio facilities, and provided for financial arrangements, including the contributions of France, for building and maintaining facilities.

A French Liaison Mission was established under the agreement to handle the details. From the French point of view the function of this mission was to preserve French sovereignty and to see that American expenditures had no ill effects on the structure of prices and wages within France, while acting as a central coordinating agency for providing facilities and arranging for construction and labor contracts for American and Allied armies. All buildings and grounds to be used by the American line of communication were to remain French property, all contracts were to be made through the Liaison Mission, and French prices were the only ones to be used.

Differences on financial arrangements, particularly on the extent of the French contribution to the line of communication and the imposition of French taxes on line of communication and construction activities, remained a source of irritation and negotiation for many months. After agreement on a minimum French share in bearing the costs, American officers and diplomats insisted that in effect the French contribution was being canceled out by the production tax, transaction tax, contract registration tax, special taxes, and certain local taxes which continued to be imposed. As a French journal put it, "Our allies do not understand very well why our government should have taxes on prices of 'facilities' granted their troops in accordance with our participation in NATO. And they do not resign themselves to it."<sup>1</sup>

At last the French agreed in June 1952 that these taxes should not apply to expenditures made in France by the United States in the interest of common defense.

The day after the signing of the basic line of communication agreement on November 6, 1950, a United States Army motor convoy of three hundred trucks and one hundred trailers crossed the Saarland from Germany and entered eastern France. Camping that night at Metz, the convoy moved in one-day stages to Milly, Orléans, and Poitiers, and arrived at Bordeaux on Saturday, November 11. There some signs appeared that an ugly labor situation and Communist antagonism might for a time jeopardize the whole program. "Deserted streets and buildings placarded with signs reading 'Bordeaux for the French and America for the Americans!' greeted the first unit of 400 men to arrive in the French Atlantic port to supervise the unloading of material and equipment for the United States armed forces in Europe."<sup>2</sup> Communistic labor leaders called for a

<sup>1</sup> *La Vie Française*, August 22, 1952.

<sup>2</sup> *The New York Times*, November 12, 1950, 35.

general strike of workers in Bordeaux for November 14 in protest against landing American supplies. But the strike failed to come off. Perhaps 90 per cent of the Bordeaux dock workers did answer a call for a protest strike on Saturday afternoon, November 25. Possibly a number of them simply wanted to take the afternoon off. At any rate that virtually ended the disturbances. While Communists agitated, French workers dutifully went about their tasks, and very quickly military supplies were being handled without incident.

South of Bordeaux, at Captieux, scheduled to be the site for a great ammunition depot, American soldiers found themselves facing a sea of mud and thousands of acres of desolate, waterlogged wasteland. There they set up pyramidal tents on what dry spots they could find, got ready for organizing the depot, and waited for construction to catch up with them.

The red tape involved in the actual selection and approval of sites for line of communication installations and in rehabilitation and construction work seemed to assure the remoteness of the day when the line of communication across France could be relied upon for the full support of forces in Germany. Acquisition of sites involved a complicated process of coordination among technical services, communications-zone headquarters, European Command Logistics Division, European Command Engineer Division, the French Liaison Mission, and interested French governmental agencies.

For its part, the French government was reluctant to take agricultural land or commercial establishments out of production, and it was unwilling to exercise the right of eminent domain in condemning private property as long as it possibly could be avoided. As a result the sites offered for line of communication installations were on public property, such as French military posts, national forests, and beach areas. This might have served well enough for the relatively small-scale operations at first planned for the line of communication, but the expansion of those activities made it necessary to look to private facilities to be rented or leased. In February 1951 French and American survey teams began an investigation of warehouses, shops, refrigerated storage buildings, office buildings, and other buildings, and land which might be rented for use for field depots.

One thing especially difficult for the French to understand was the necessity for finding all kinds of subsidiary facilities for American forces. They discovered that providing sites suitable for headquarters and warehouses and troop barracks soon involved as well requests for additional areas for baseball fields, post exchanges, snack bars, theaters, and service clubs. Some such facilities seemed essential to overcome the boredom of men living in desolate areas of a strange land, often far removed from sizable towns. But the French *poilu* had been able to get along for years without all these peripheral

developments, and to the French it was not always clear why these special services were so important for American morale.

The fact that the French were preoccupied with the reconstruction of their war-devastated towns, that they had no modern construction industry able to meet immediate demands for rapid and extensive military construction, that a number of installation sites were poorly drained, and that administrative procedures were cumbersome made it a foregone conclusion that rehabilitation and construction projects could not be completed speedily. Such places as the military casernes at Orléans, Fontainebleau, and Verdun still bore the marks of war destruction, and there extensive renovation was necessary. In forest areas and wastelands, areas had to be drained and access roads built as well as new buildings raised for storage and troop housing.

Construction projects soon lagged far behind schedule. In September 1951 the European Command approved a program for prefabricated buildings to be erected for troop housing and for warehouses at a number of sites where permanent structures obviously could not be completed for many months. But this program, too, soon fell behind schedule. Some ten French firms contracted to erect forty-eight company-size units—each including six barracks, a kitchen and mess hall, a building for orderly room and supply room, and one for day-room and latrine facilities—at eighteen sites where no housing was available. January 1, 1952, was the date set for completion of the project, but on that date not one of the buildings was ready for occupancy. Hardly a tenth of the buildings had been erected, and these did not include utilities or access roads, which had to be provided under separate contracts. An unusually wet winter—which made living conditions even less bearable for the troops—as well as the French system of separate contractors working independently at each task in a given area, and administrative red tape, held back the whole prefabricated building program. At one big installation French contractors spent more than a year in erecting half a dozen barracks, and then the lights and toilets failed to work satisfactorily. In 1953 some ten thousand United States Army troops faced the prospect of spending their third winter in tents. Since priority had been assigned to troop housing in this program, construction of prefabricated warehouses in order to meet shipping schedules of supplies being transferred to France from Germany was even more delayed.

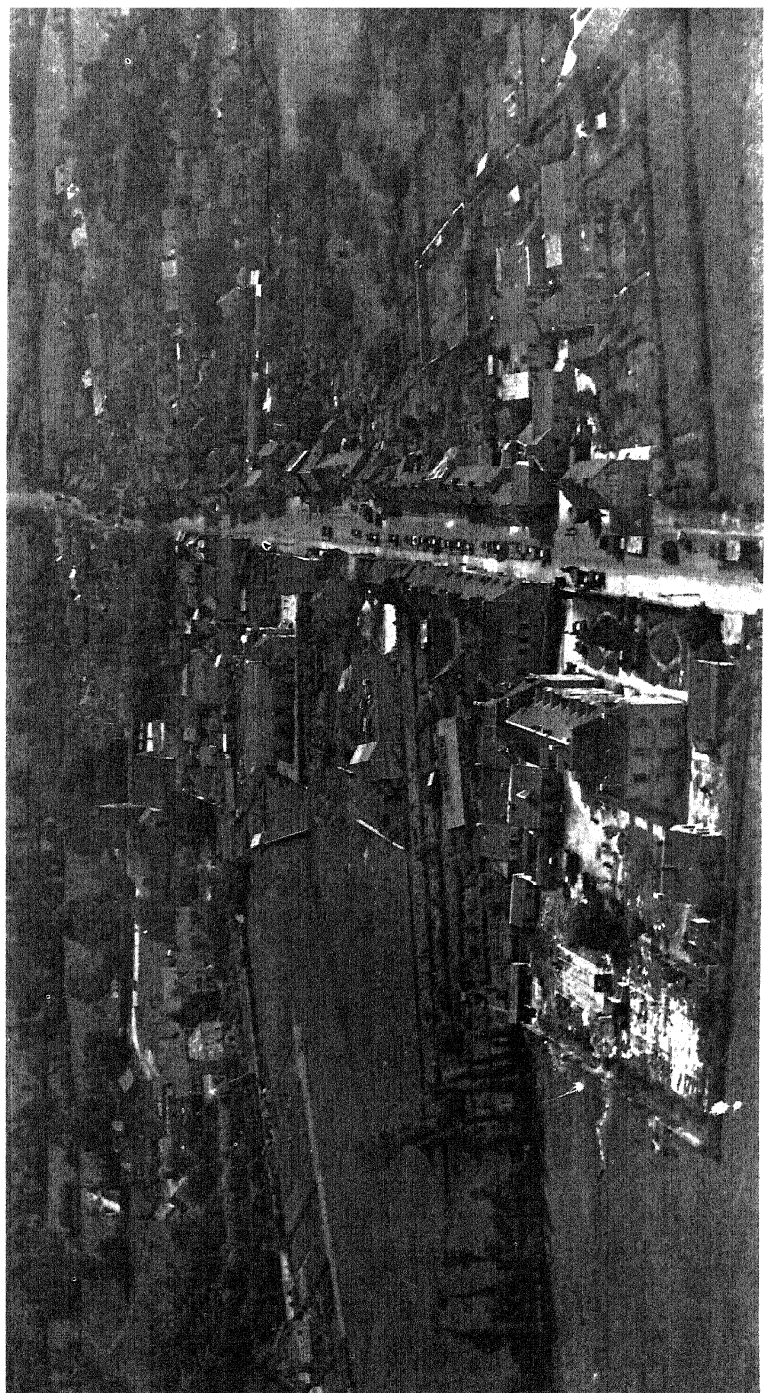
To make matters worse, Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson in February 1953 imposed a "freeze" on all new construction in order to give the new administration in Washington time to study the whole program for itself. This remained in effect for three months—during which the weather turned out to be most favorable for construction work. After two and one-half years of frustration and

delay, the program thus was set back another several months. Moreover the close surveillance of congressional committees and the trepidation of subordinate officers tended to contribute further to the delays, as local commanders, unwilling to risk making mistakes, passed decisions up the line for approval at higher headquarters.

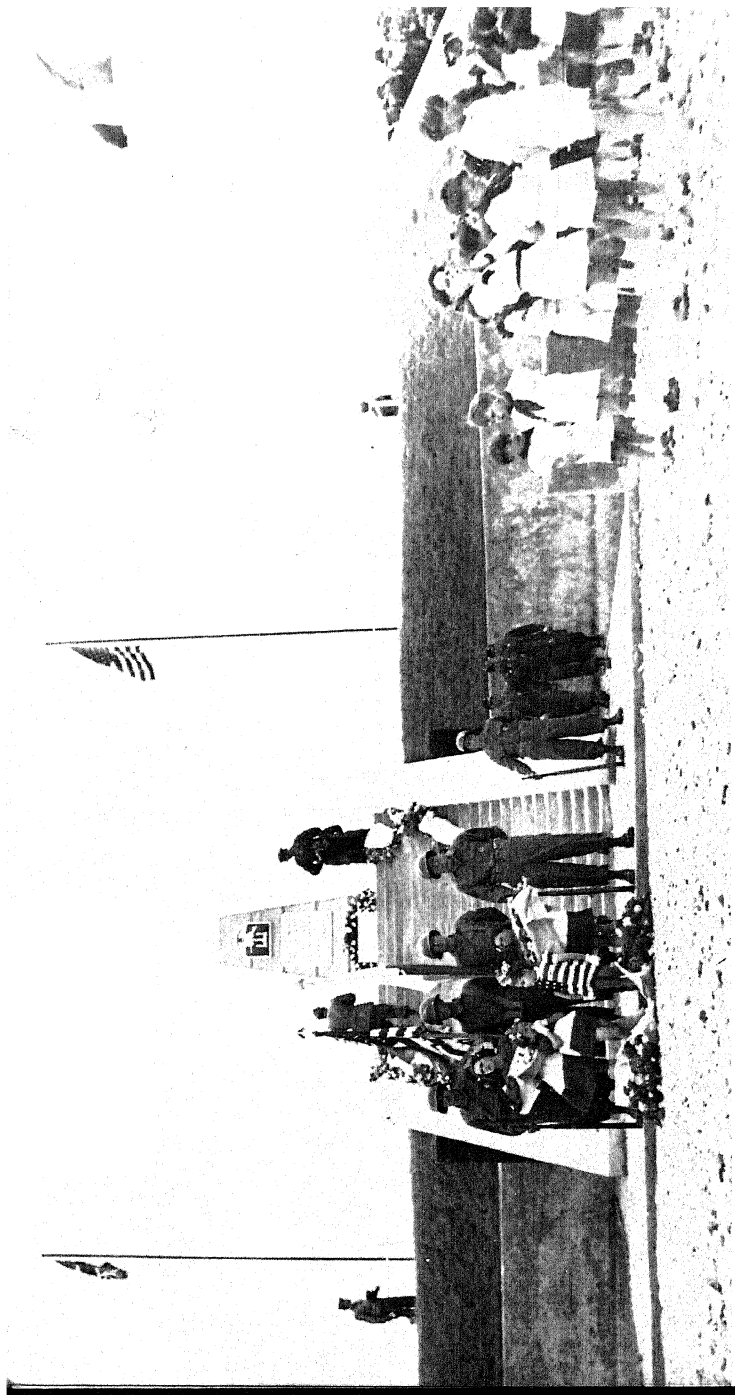
Despite vexatious administrative details and local ways of doing things, and despite the delays which characterized the whole construction program, notable achievements were to be found. It took time to overcome the difficulties, but in time they usually could be worked out. In time the mud and water at Captieux gave way to hardstands, roads, and walks paved with crushed stone or bitumen; clean, well-built barracks replaced tents for the eight hundred men on duty there, and bar, service club, and theater appeared on what previously had been a great bog. Reconstruction at Caserne Coligny in Orléans transformed that post from war ruins to a collection of attractive headquarters buildings, modernistic mess hall, and service club rooms. Steel prefabricated huts appeared at Maison Fort and at Jeumont, adjacent to La Rochelle, and trim prefabricated buildings rose in the *Fôret de Haye*. The Nancy Ordnance Depot had most of its facilities, including well-constructed barracks with utilities in good condition, completed by the summer of 1953. The Fontainebleau Medical Depot was turned into a virtual show-place. By January 1954 two-thirds of the American troops in France were sheltered in reconstructed French barracks or prefabricated hutments. Most of the others remained in tents. Many officers and enlisted men with families lived in apartments or houses off the military posts. Slowly the line of communication across France reached the state where it could support major military operations.

Concurrently with the development of storage, headquarters, and quartering sites, supply activities on the line of communication began. Some supplies came into the forward areas of France from Germany. Others went in by the ports—in the southwest Bordeaux and La Pallice (where the Mole d'Escale, built for the use of the American Expeditionary Force in 1917-1918 afforded the only deep draft dockside berthing in the whole area), and Nantes and Saint-Nazaire (after April 1953) on the estuary of the Loire at the base of the Brittany peninsula. By freight train and motor truck American military supplies and equipment moved northward and northeastward, across the battlefield where Edward of England, the Black Prince, defeated King John of France in 1356, to Poitiers, through the fields where in 732 Charles Martel stopped the Moors who had been advancing over this same route, to Tours, where this route joined the other coming from Saint-Nazaire and Nantes up the picturesque valley of the Loire to Orléans, set in a countryside little changed since Jeanne d'Arc led her French troops to raise the siege of the city in 1429. Eastward the routes diverged along two main

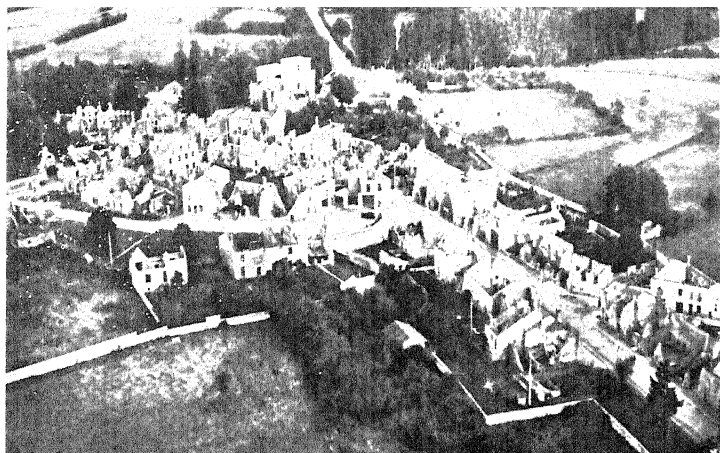




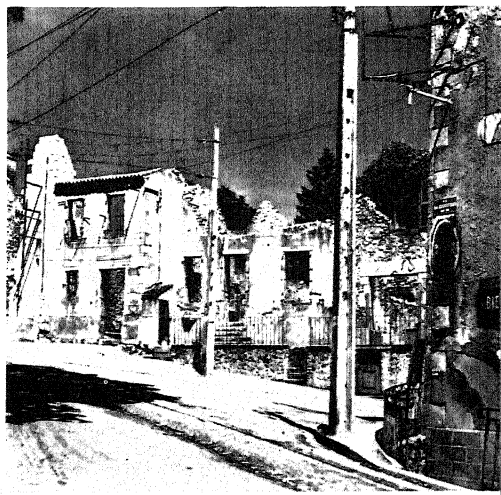
Sainte-Mère Eglise, first town to be liberated in 1944



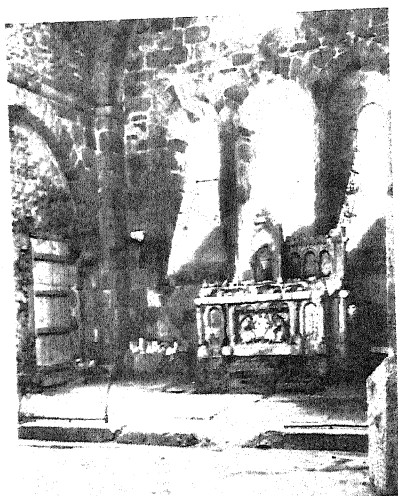
Ceremonies commemorating Utah Beach



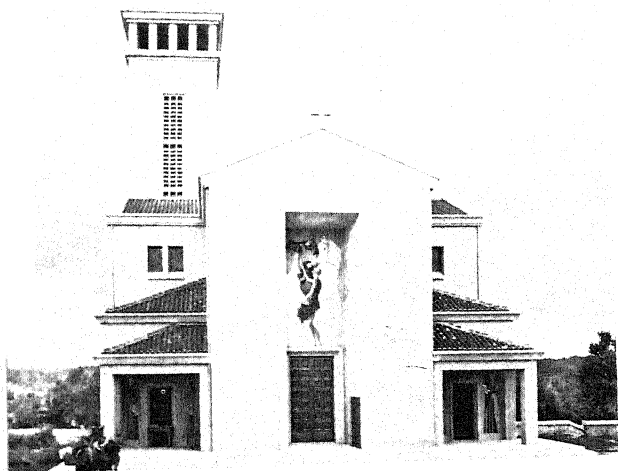
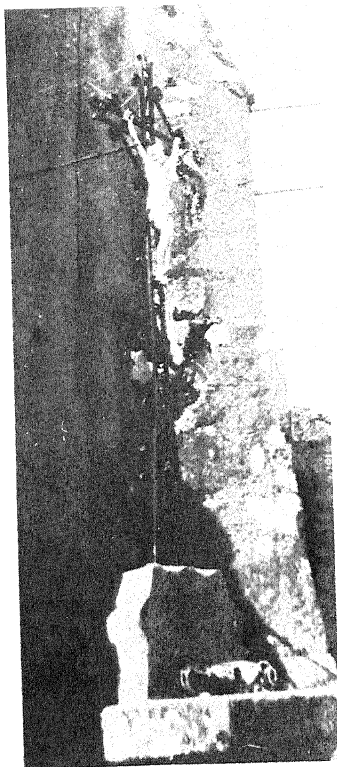
Oradour-sur-Glane:  
only six survived



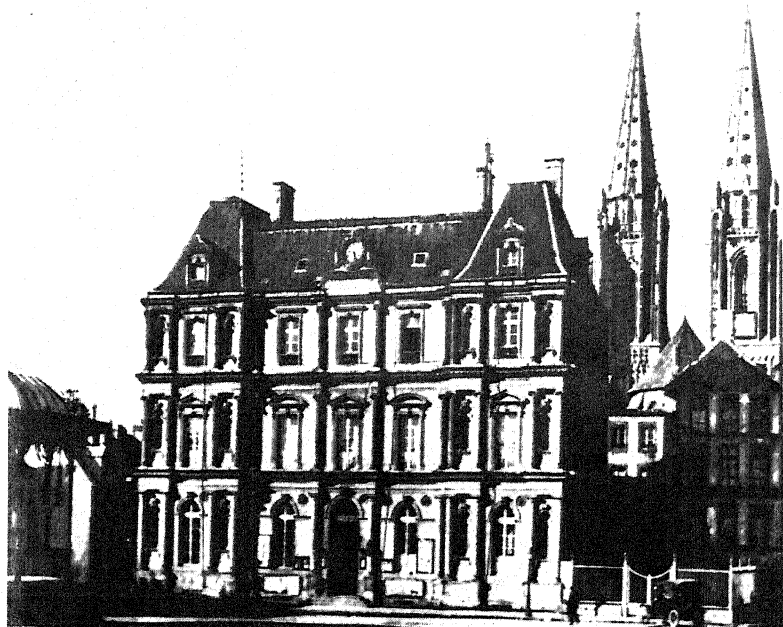
A survivor of fire  
and explosions at  
the church door



Oradour-sur-Glane: window of escape



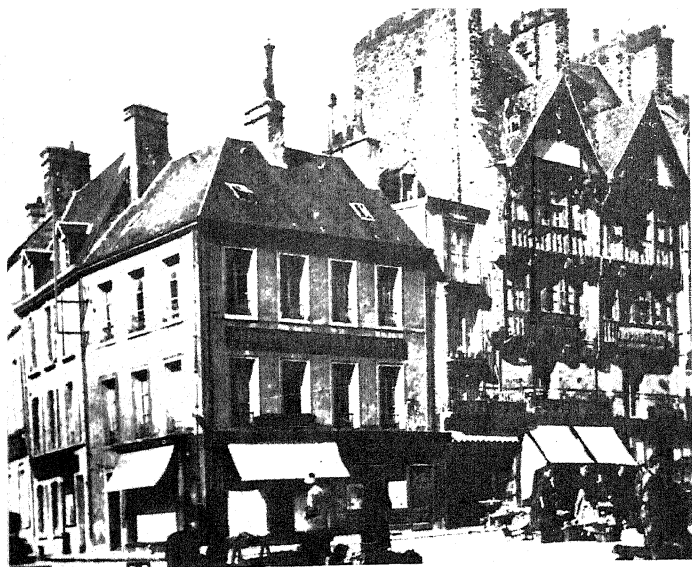
Oradour's new church



Saint-Lô: Hôtel de Ville and Notre Dame before the bombing



Afterward



Saint-Lô: La Place du Marché and Maison Dieu before the bombing



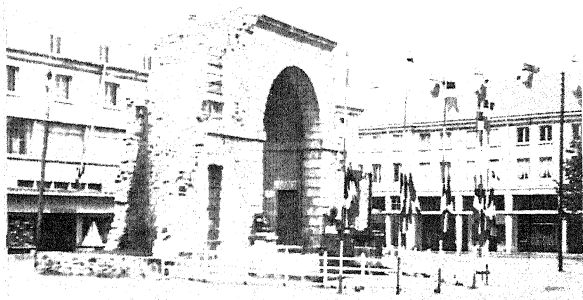
Afterward



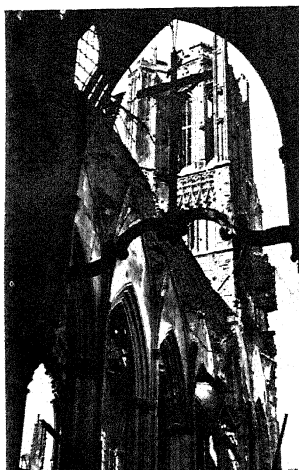
Saint-Lô: It took six years just to clear the rubble







The old prison door survives among Saint-Lô's new buildings



Saint-Lô: ruins of Notre Dame

The new campanile and the old Saint-Croix at Saint-Lô

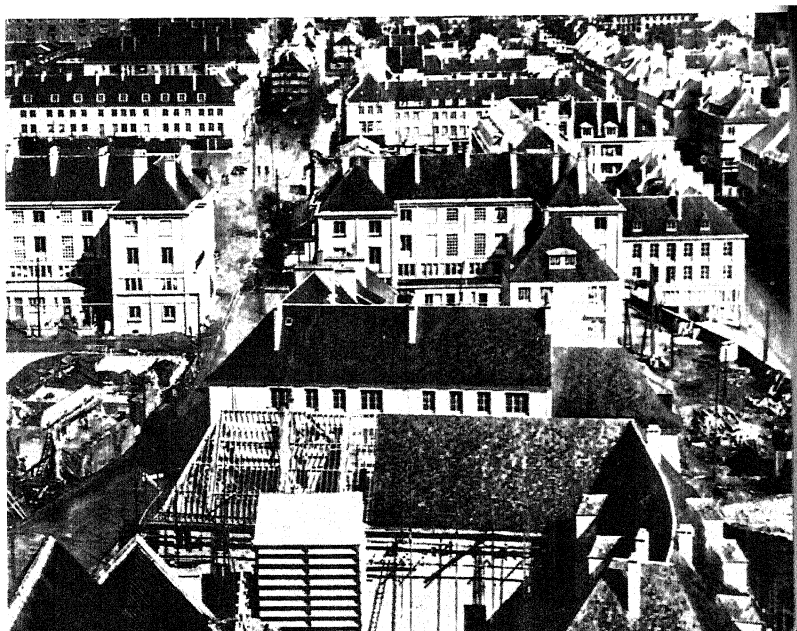


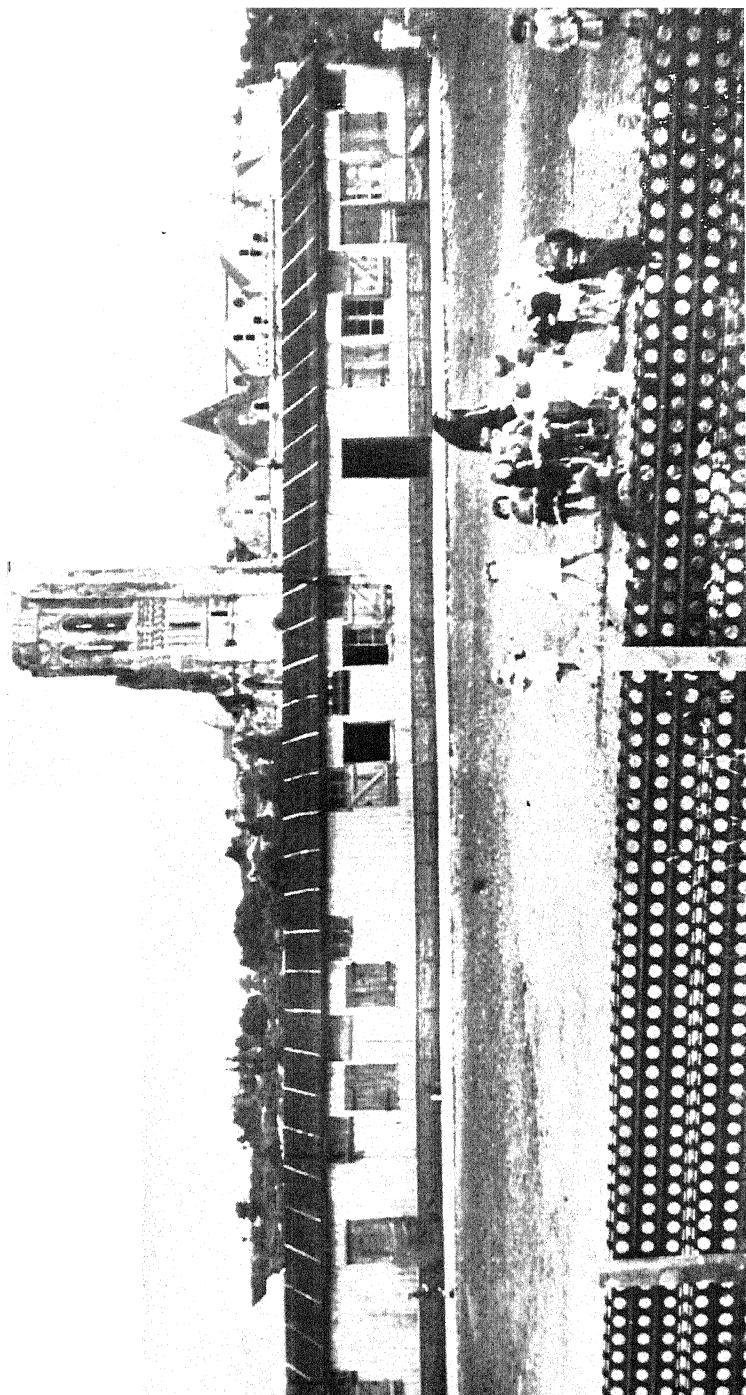




Saint-Lô from the roof of Notre Dame  
After the bombing

After reconstruction

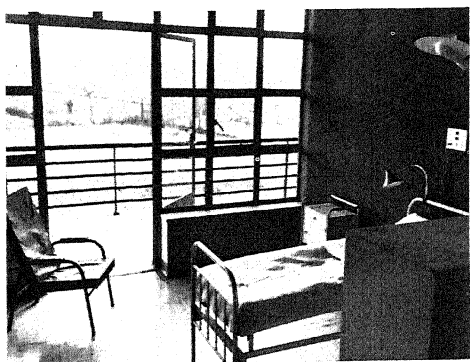


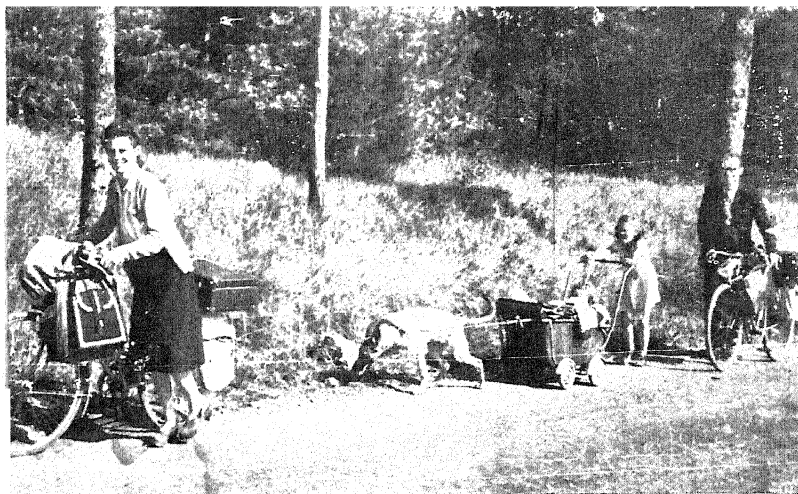


Saint-Lô; school children at Ecole Saint-Josef, temporary quarters, with Notre Dame in the background. Fencing is U.S. Air Force pierced planking



Views of the French-American  
Memorial Hospital, Saint-Lô





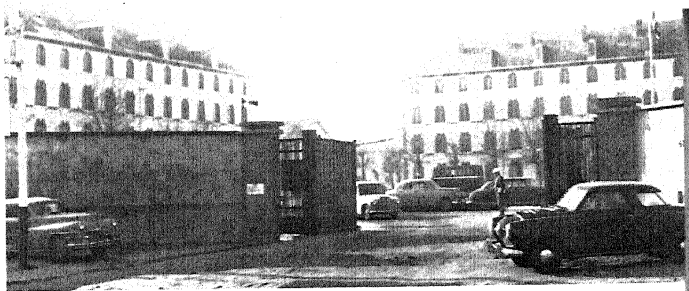
Refugees cheered by the arrival of the 35th Division, near Mortain, 1944



Ferme "La Buste," on the site of "Bloody Sunday," near Saint-Lô



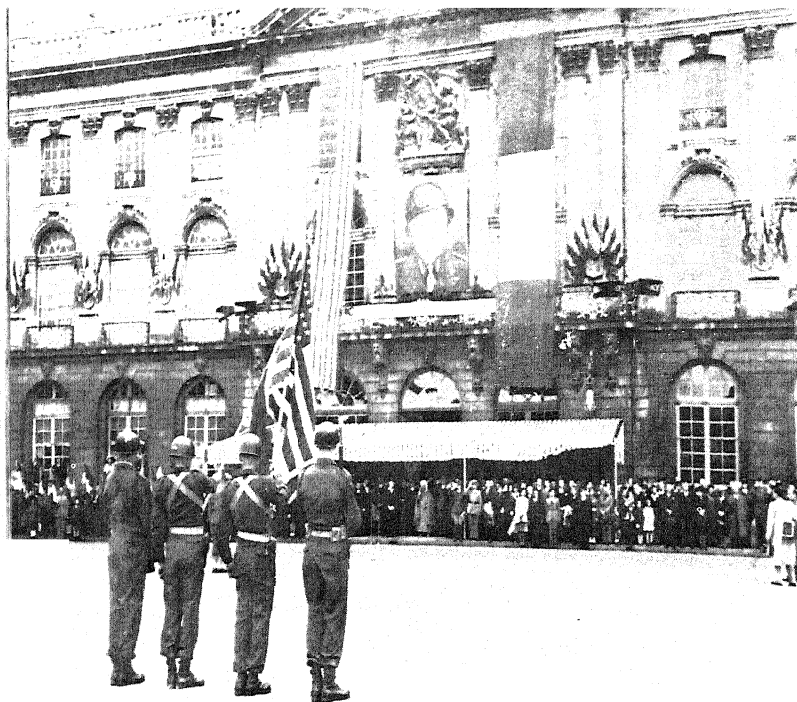
Orléans: the third coming of the Americans



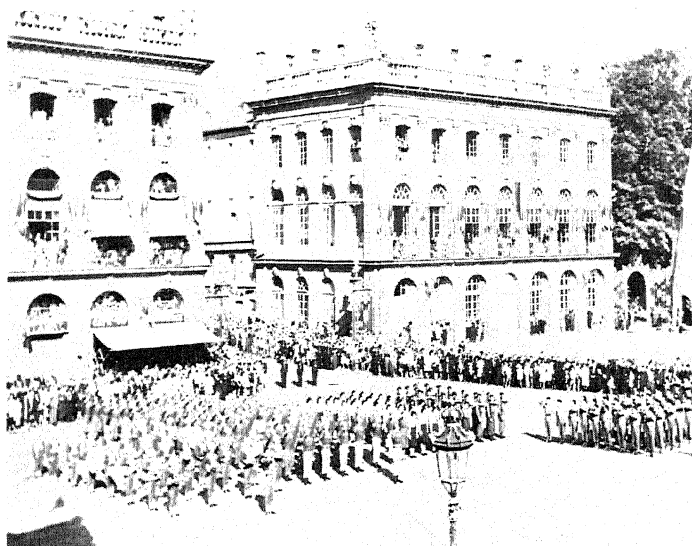
Caserne Coligny, Orléans, Communication-Zone headquarters

Toul: 651st Truck Company marshaling area, Red Ball Express

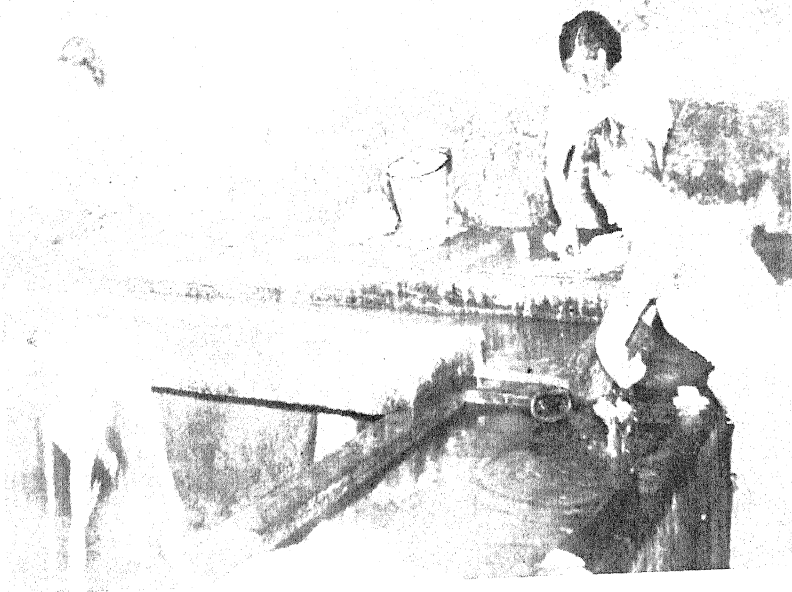




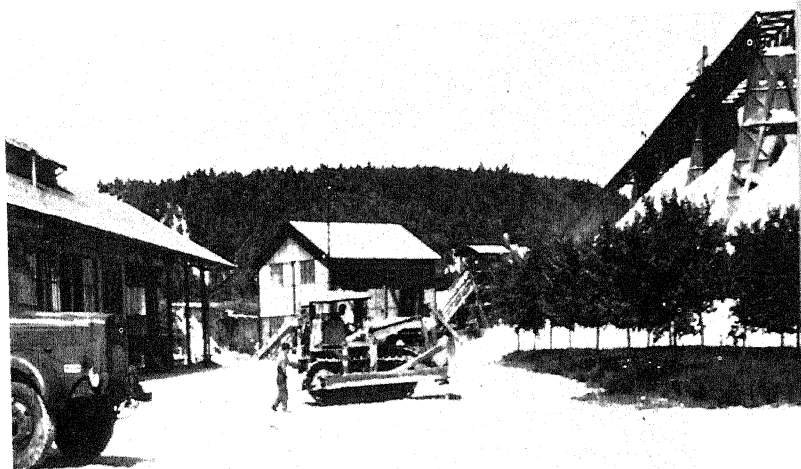
Place Stanislas, Nancy: "Hommage au General Patton"



134th Infantry and 35th Division Band join in French celebration of Bastille Day, Place Stanislas, Nancy

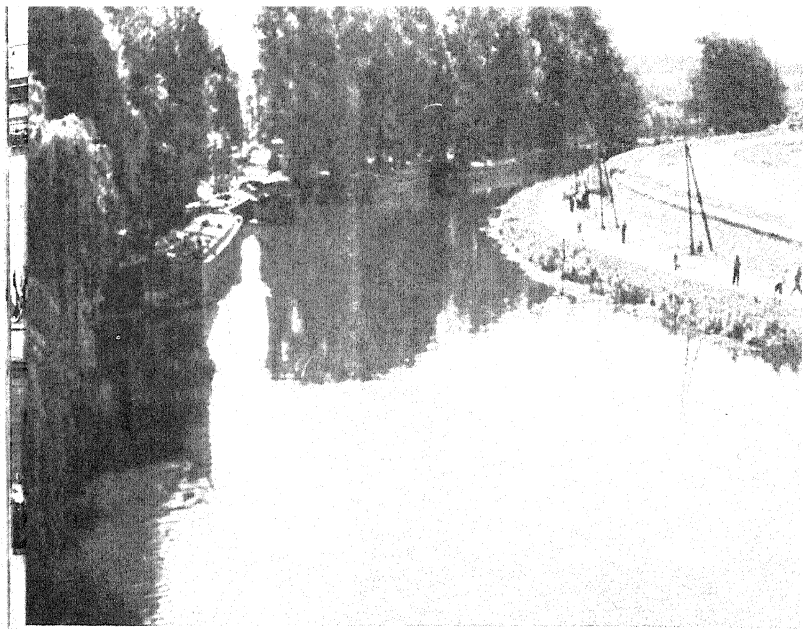


The ancient: public wash house near Nancy

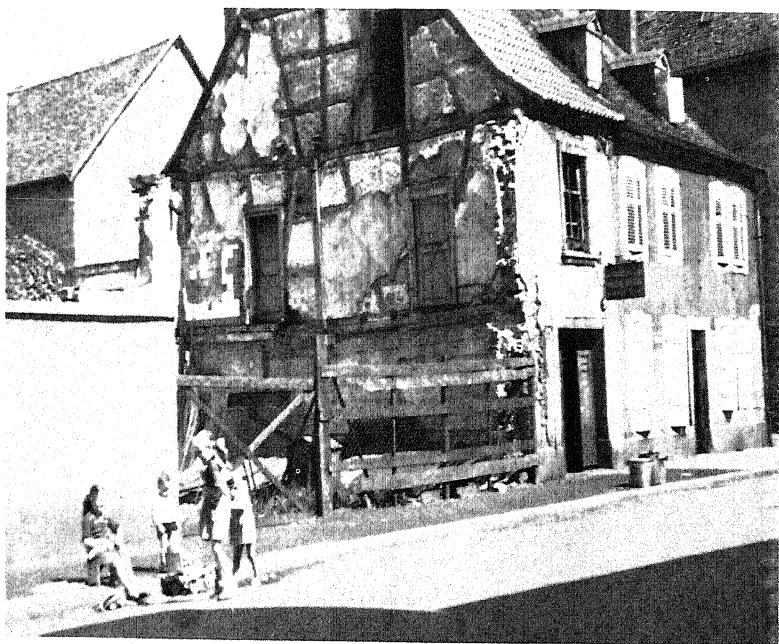


And the modern: salt mine nearby





Eastern frontier: Sarre River at Sarreguemines



Sarreguemines street scene



lines. The northern route ran through Fontainebleau, historic home of French royalty; across the plains where Romans and Visigoths combined to turn back Attila and the Huns in 451 to Châlons-sur-Marne; across grim battlefields of World War I and World War II to Verdun and to Metz, and across the border at Saarbrücken. The southern route continued eastward from Orléans through Montargis, Sens, and Troyes to Toul and Nancy, and across the border at Sarreguemines. The two routes then converged in the Saar and continued through Kaiserslautern and Ludwigshafen to Mannheim.

As provided in the agreement signed in November 1950, most American supplies went across France by rail. Coordination with the French national railroads, the Société Nationale Chemin de Fer (SNCF), was arranged through the French General Staff. Military supplies went across France to Germany under the same rules that governed European commercial shipments as provided in the International Convention concerning the Shipment of Goods by Rail signed at Rome in 1933. The French SNCF and the German Federal Railways (Bundesbahn) have established a common freightcar pool to facilitate freight movements between the two countries. For its part the United States Army has provided a number of freight cars of its own in order to have cars ready on spurs when needed, and to provide a certain amount of mobile storage space in railroad yards. The United States, of course, had to bear the cost of transportation for all its own military supplies.

Highway transportation supplemented the railroads to a limited extent. Late in 1952 the Communications Zone in France revived a small-scale version of the wartime Red Ball Express. Operating a trailer-transfer system with five-ton tractor-trucks and twelve-ton semitrailers, the new Red Ball Express was organized to give transportation units experience in long-distance hauling, and to provide a nucleus for rapid expansion in the event of an emergency.

American storage areas in France were by no means arranged in a single or double line across the country. They were well distributed over large areas. Tanks and engines, for example, went to a storage farm near Toul. Bulldozers, graders, bridging sections and tractors went to the Engineer depot at Chinon. Trucks, jeeps, ambulances, and parts went to the Ordnance depot at Angoulême. Bulk supplies of food and clothing went to Ingrandes and Metz. Signal Corps switchboards, field wire, telephones, and radios went to Sammur and Verdun. These and other supplies went to a dozen other depots and storage areas. Supplies moved along one of the principal routes which the American Expeditionary Force's Services of Supply used in 1917-1918. Trucks on long hauls followed the same routes that the spearheads of General Patton's Third Army followed in the race across France in 1944.

Although army commanders had indicated concern about the position of their forces in Germany, apparently the Berlin blockade of 1948-1949 had made no really lasting impression on logistics planners. It could be expected that demands in Congress for economy might result in some reduction in the overall strength of the armed forces, but it also could be assumed that international political and military considerations would require that forces in Europe be maintained at their current strength. The fact that the Russians were reported to have exploded an atomic bomb, and the expectation that it would be January 1954 before other states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization could approach military self-sufficiency gave substance to the latter assumption. As a matter of fact in January 1950 the Department of the Army developed plans for some increase in the size of forces in Europe. Then the Communist attack in Korea brought about a reorientation in thinking for undertaking a much more substantial reinforcement of the European Command—even while the Far East Command was being reinforced.

Since 1945 most thinking on the size of American forces in Europe had emphasized reduction and retrenchment, as Western Germany re-formed its internal political and economic structure. Then the Korean attack at last convinced everyone that forces in Germany no longer were there primarily for occupation purposes, but for the defense of West Germany and the countries of Western Europe. Germany, like Korea, was a divided country, and what had happened in East Asia also could happen in central Europe. In Korea the Communists had given their first indication that they were willing to resort to force of arms, directly and openly, in order to gain their objectives. With or without the instigation of their Soviet patrons, forces from East Germany might at any time undertake the violent unification of the country. Or Soviet leaders might decide that this was the time to bid for domination of Western Europe, and Red divisions might strike from Germany. In these circumstances it appeared that the major concerns of American military leaders in Europe during the next several years would be the strengthening of forces, both in terms of manpower and fighting potential, and the relocation of facilities and lines of communication in order to be prepared to stand and fight in a defensive war.

By early 1951, when the situation in the Far East was most critical, the Department of the Army was developing plans for sending four additional divisions to the European Command. But now a certain amount of opposition to these plans arose in Congress. Objections centered mainly on the President's right to send forces overseas without consulting Congress. Some congressmen expressed a fear that such action might establish a precedent which would lead to a usurpation on the part of the President of the power of Congress to declare war. For all practical purposes, of course, the Presi-

dent could involve the country in war anyway in his conduct of the nation's foreign policy. Moreover the precedent of sending units of the armed forces abroad by executive authority had been established for at least 146 years, since a Marine detachment participated in the march on Derna—"on the shores of Tripoli"—in 1804, and it was a policy which frequently had been followed since that time. The President had sent military units into foreign countries on his own authority on such occasions as the sending of Marines to Sumatra and the Fiji Islands, to Formosa in 1867 and 1870, to Korea in 1871 and 1903, and to several of the Caribbean republics at various times; the China Relief Expedition to Tientsin and Peking at the time of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900; Pershing's expedition to Mexico in pursuit of Villa in 1916; the expedition to Siberia in 1918; the sending of Marines to Tientsin and Shanghai in 1927; as well as the action in Korea in 1950. After lengthy hearings conducted jointly by the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations committees in February 1951, the Senate adopted a resolution which stated: "The Senate hereby approves the present plans of the President and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to send four additional divisions of ground forces to Western Europe, but it is the sense of the Senate that no ground troops in addition to such four divisions should be sent to Western Europe in implementation of Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty without further congressional approval."<sup>3</sup>

The additional units sent to Europe brought the combat troop strength of American forces in Germany up to the equivalent of over six divisions. This was comparable in strength to the American elements in the United States Eighth Army in Korea. The Senate resolution of course did not have the force of law, but to an army anxious to maintain amiable relations with Congress the resolution practically amounted to law. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services committees on July 31, 1951, General J. Lawton Collins, then Army Chief of Staff, gave the total strength of the army in the European area, including the divisions then scheduled to arrive in the fall, as approximately 284,000 men. For all practical purposes this figure then became the troop ceiling for that area, and the army contemplated no further increase without first obtaining congressional approval.

The build-up of troop strength in Europe indicated that Europe still, as in World War II, was receiving consideration as the area of prime importance in world-wide strategy. It appeared that the additional forces were being sent to Europe (1) in order by their

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<sup>3</sup> *Congressional Record*, 82d Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 97 (April 4, 1951), 3282-83; see also Hearings, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and Committee on Armed Forces, *Assignment of Ground Forces of the United States to European Area*, 82d Cong., 1st Sess. (Feb. 1-28, 1951); Senate Report 175, March 14, 1951, *Assignment of Ground Forces of the United States to Duty in the European Area*.

presence to deter an attack against Western Europe; (2) to defend key areas if attacked; (3) to encourage by their presence resistance on the part of European allies.

In effect these reinforcements more than tripled the troop strength of American forces in Europe. This of course had important implications for logistics. Not only did equipment have to be found and shipped for the units being sent, but additional supplies had to be made available to maintain these troops, and reserve stocks of supplies had to be expanded for their support. In terms of days of supply, reserve stocks in Europe were of course automatically reduced by more than two-thirds upon the arrival of the reinforcements. And these additional supplies had to be found, and shipped, and stored for forces in Europe when more and more supplies were being required for operations in the Far East.

The reinforcement of the European Command in 1951 made obsolete the original plans for the line of communication across France even before they could be begun. While surveys were being made to find sites for installations, negotiations had to be resumed for more sites and more facilities. Undertaken in an atmosphere of extreme urgency, the negotiations soon settled down again to the cumbersome pace of peacetime bureaucracy on both sides of the Atlantic.

Soon supplies were arriving in France more rapidly than they could be absorbed in the new storage system. During the first six months of 1951 an average of more than sixty cars of ammunition a day were unloaded at the Captieux depot. Other supplies and equipment of all classes arrived in France both at the ports and by rail from Germany. A year later depots still were makeshift installations. Supplies were put under cover as much as possible, but a great deal had to be re-stored before it could be issued in an effective way to support an emergency. Approximately 40 per cent of the planned tonnage of supplies had arrived in France before 10 per cent of the necessary storage facilities had been completed. Fortunately, time proved to be available without the interruption of an emergency, and given time, most of the major problems then apparent could be overcome in the next two or three years.

Headquarters for this extensive American military supply system in France is at the Caserne Coligny in Orléans. A headquarters detachment which had been operating from the Astoria Hotel in Paris moved to Orléans in December 1950. At the same time subordinate area commands moved to La Rochelle (in a beautifully modernized former hospital building) and to Verdun. During the first few months of its operation, this organization was referred to simply as the "Line of Communication" (as had the World War I supply organization of the AEF before its redesignation as Services of Sup-

ply). Then in July 1951 it was designated the European Command Communications Zone (Communications Zone being the term used in World War II). Its subordinate commands include the Base Section, with headquarters at La Rochelle, the Advance Section, with headquarters at Verdun, and an Orléans Area Command for the administration of units in the Orléans area.

At first the Communications Zone was supposed to be a joint Army-Navy-Air Force organization, and for a time Air Force officers did in fact serve on its staff. Later the Air Force withdrew its participation, presumably the better to preserve its "co-equality," and the Communications Zone became a purely Army organization. Under an extensive reorganization of the American military command structure in Europe which became effective August 1, 1952, the old European Command, with headquarters at Heidelberg, was redesignated, U. S. Army, Europe. At the same time a new U. S. European Command was established as a truly joint headquarters over U. S. Army, Europe, U. S. Air Forces in Europe (headquarters at Wiesbaden), and U. S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean (headquarters at London). General Matthew B. Ridgway, who had succeeded General Eisenhower as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, now received the additional responsibility of serving as commander in chief of the new unified U. S. European Command. General Homer H. Gruenther later succeeded General Ridgway in both commands, and he in turn was succeeded by General Lauris Norstad of the Air Force.

While the Communications Zone now was a purely Army organization, and was directly subordinate to U. S. Army, Europe at Heidelberg, it did continue to handle supplies for the Air Force as well as for the Army. Its territorial jurisdiction was limited to France. Supply activities in Germany come under the U. S. Seventh Army or directly under U. S. Army, Europe. Within France the Base Section included the ports and depots generally within the area limited by Saint-Nazaire, La Rochelle, Tours, Châteauroux, Limoges, Captieux, Bordeaux, and the Gironde estuary. The depots and installations of the Advance Section generally were to be found within a triangle limited by Châlons-sur-Marne, Verdun, Metz, Nancy, Toul, Saint-Dizier. Commanding generals of the Communications Zone (Orléans) have been, in turn, Brig. Gen. Mason B. Young, Maj. Gen. Samuel D. Sturgis, and Maj. Gen. Lemuel Mathewson.

The renovated Caserne Coligny presents a trim, military appearance in its new role as headquarters for the United States Army Communications Zone. A conspicuous American flag, flying over the neat lawn on the front court, immediately identifies this as one of the American military posts which have been established all across France. Inside, the various staff sections were set up for business in about the same way they would be found in the United

States. The one thing which set this headquarters apart from a similar one in the United States was the presence of French civilian employees. Most of the clerks, secretaries, caretakers, and service employees were French.

Behind the long barracks which now served as office buildings was a large mess hall. Its concrete floor, masonry walls, tables, and stoves all were neat and clean, and the place was gaily decorated with two-tone green walls, tan figured curtains, and fluorescent overhead lights. The tables were small, with four chairs each. On the main door some of the enterprising cooks or kitchen police had mounted magazine cut-outs showing a chef (sergeant's stripes are supplied) beside big dishes of specially prepared foods. Below was a sign reading:

If you have discriminating taste. . . .

Then dine in relaxed surroundings where pleasing you is our only concern.

. . . During a tiring day when traveling in a foreign country becomes strenuous, a touch of American simplicity coupled with delectable meals as only the French can prepare them is at your convenience. If you prefer the personal touch to your food in regal settings, then why venture further?

Personalized cooking.

Once you have selected the main course for your meal be it the chateaubriand or wiener a la C-ration, you may instruct one of our courteous chefs in its preparation. The head waiter, Monsieur Pogo, awaits with bated breath to see that your every need is satisfied. While in France make it a point to enjoy food prepared by experts as can be had only at the Salle de la Mess.

Whenever the hospitality of the mess hall became unbearable, soldiers at the Caserne Coligny always could turn to the snack bar for a meal, or for something to tide them over between meals. This, too, was in a sturdy, gaily decorated masonry building with concrete floors. Large, brightly colored travel posters, neatly framed on the walls, showed scenes of the Alps, the Riviera, a country village, a medieval town, and a fishing fleet putting out to sea. A big jukebox, with lighted, multicolored front, stood at one end of the room to blare out current soldier selections.

An enlisted men's service club had been set up in a one-story building behind the mess hall. Motion picture and vaudeville entertainment were provided in six army theaters which operate in the Orléans area.

All purchases in snack bars, service clubs, post exchanges, or at any other American military facility had to be paid for in American military scrip. Neither American dollars nor French francs were acceptable. If a soldier wanted francs to buy something in a French shop, or to take a trip, he had to go to an office of the American Express Company to exchange some of the scrip for francs. Or if for some authorized reason he needed dollars, he might exchange

scrip for dollars at an American Express Company office. As at many major military posts, the American Express Company operated an office at the Caserne Coligny in Orléans. This was done under army regulations as a nonprofit service for the Treasury Department. Some indication of the business of this local office may be seen by looking at monthly sales. One month for instance, soldiers bought \$120,000 worth of travelers cheques and money orders. About one-third of this was in money orders for sending back funds to the United States. Most of the travelers cheques were used in Europe. In addition the Orléans office exchanged about \$10,000 worth of scrip for French francs to cover local travel.

Another special service which American Express had was the organization of special tours for members of the armed forces. Ordinarily the rates on these tours ran about five dollars a day cheaper than the fifteen to twenty dollars a day for comparable regular tours. A four-day, all-expense trip to Switzerland, leaving from Paris on July 4, cost \$65. A trip to the bullfighting festival at Pamplona, Spain, six days from Paris, cost \$74.

Most of the soldiers who worked in the various offices or facilities in Orléans were billeted in a camp at Maison Fort, about six miles south of the city. Here buildings and tents had been set up in a pine thicket similar to those found at Camp Rucker, Alabama. Prefabricated steel huts served as orderly rooms, supply rooms, snack bar, and chapel. Concrete block and stucco warehouses and shops lay along the main axis of the camp, but the living quarters were in greasy-looking olive-drab pyramidal tents pitched in rows in the thicket and woods. A large athletic field, complete with bleachers, adjoined the camp proper.

Camps more or less similar to this are to be found all across France. The ammunition depot south of Captieux was described as "sand desert in summer, swamp in winter, windy in all seasons"; previously the area had been considered fit only for a bombing range, and as long as soldiers there had to remain in tents, it was acknowledged almost universally as the worst place in France (or Europe) to be stationed.

The Ingrandes Quartermaster Depot, located on the site of an abandoned French ammunition depot of World War I, midway between Poitiers and Tours, was in the picturesque region of the valley of the Vienne, but until two or three years ago the camp itself made a miserable picture. Entirely in the sun, its dark, oily pyramidal tents absorbed the heat reflected from steel prefabricated huts and concrete and stucco buildings. In wet weather cold dampness replaced the heat, and clouds of dust gave way to rivers of mud made fordable by crushed stone driveways and boardwalks along all the tent rows. But building and expansion have continued steadily through the years. What was a camp of small tents and twenty-eight

acres of desolate ground in 1952 had become by 1957 a depot covering two hundred acres of land, with thirty-one modern warehouses—comprising 1,600,000 square feet of storage space; 235,000 square feet of open storage areas; eight modern, three-story barracks; a new administration building, a gymnasium; an athletic field; shops; and roads, railroads, and marshaling yards. Even in 1955 the value of quartermaster supplies and equipment stored here was approximately \$40,000,000, and annual operating costs were about \$4,250,000. The depot stored theater reserve supplies of food, clothing, individual and unit equipment, and special projects equipment. It issued nonperishable food and spare parts for quartermaster equipment to some forty Army and Air Force installations in France and Germany.

East of Toul, at the Caserne Jeanne d'Arc, members of the 651st Transportation (medium truck) Company took matters into their own hands. When they arrived there in October 1952 they found nothing but rubble and open fields. The caserne had been completely demolished by bombs during World War II. In December 1952 they began operating a trailer transfer point here as a part of the system of the revived Red Ball Express. After spending all that winter and the following summer in the contrasting discomforts of army tents, the officers and men of the 651st decided to do something about it before the arrival of the next winter. Without waiting for negotiations and contracts and appropriations of funds, they determined to build themselves some huts with their own hands. They were in a good position to collect salvage materials, and that was all they needed. There was not a professional carpenter in the whole company, but that did not deter them. First they built a prototype hut. From this they took the measurements and design for all the others. Working during off-duty time, the men soon had constructed seventeen huts—four for each platoon and a double for supply room. The huts were built of wood covered with rubberoid. They had wooden floors, and the interior walls were covered—and here the requirements for uniformity were suspended—with colored wallpaper indicative of the artistic bents of the occupants. Some of the soldiers bought a toy sewing machine in Nancy, and with it they made fancy curtains for their windows. Six men occupied each hut, though ten bunks could be crowded in if necessary.

Now when one approaches the site of the Caserne Jeanne d'Arc, a big sign beside the road catches his eye. It carries the shield and wheels insignia of the Transportation Corps, and a big red ball is in the center. The sign reads:

651st Truck Co.  
Red Ball Express  
Trailer Transfer Point  
U.S. Army



While keeping up their principal mission of operating a leg of the Red Ball Express, men of the 651st Transportation Company—like those of the other Communications Zone posts in France—are kept alert to local combat responsibilities in case of emergency.

A few miles down the road, east, from the 651st Transportation Company, in the *Fôret de Haye* west of Nancy, is the big Nancy Ordnance Depot. That this area had been the scene of heavy bombing and some fighting before the liberation of Nancy in 1944 soon became obvious to the men who went to work here building the facilities needed for the ordnance depot. Trees cleared from the area were sold to a lumber buyer, but when they were being sawed the saws frequently hit shell fragments and bullets which had been lodged in the trees since 1944. During the grading of one of the roadways into the depot area the grader turned up an unexploded bomb.

There was little here but trees and tents when the first troops arrived at the Nancy Ordnance Depot in October 1951. Permanent construction began early in 1952, and the first phase was completed in February and March 1953. But the mud had grown steadily worse. In photographs taken in March 1953 the prefabricated barracks and the shops then completed appear to be adrift on a sea of mud—mud that was virtually impassable for all ordinary wheeled vehicles. At that time a number of the officers, awaiting the arrival of their families, were living at the Hotel Thiers in Nancy. Each evening, boots caked with mud, they would get out of a truck in front of the hotel. There they would wash off their boots under a fire hydrant before entering the building.

By the summer of 1954, when the second phase of the construction program was beginning, most of the troops were living in prefabricated barracks. Some still were in tents, but within the next year they were moved into a new 250-man barracks which was a part of the Phase II program. Other major items being built included a number of warehouses and an enlisted men's service club. A civilian resident engineer from the Joint Construction Agency, the agency of the U. S. European Command charged with coordinating and supervising American military construction in France, had an office on the post. Whenever any trees had to be cut, clearance had to be obtained from the French national forester who had his headquarters across the highway from the post.

The mud problem had been largely overcome by the construction of good concrete roads into the post and through its main axes, and the connecting roads were graveled. Several concrete-block shops and warehouses had been built, but a great quantity of equipment still was in the huts which had been improvised in the early months to get out of the mud, and many were in "warehouses" which have been improvised simply by stacking palletized boxes to

form their own walls, and then covering them with a tin roof. Many vehicles were parked in open lots among the trees, marked by area and zone numbers. A major task of the maintenance shops was to keep these vehicles in good condition.

The U. S. Army built a twelve-kilometer railroad to connect the depot with the French railways, and two and one-half kilometers of railroad spurs have been brought into the post. Loading platforms and a big warehouse have been built at the railhead. A two-and-a-half-ton truck, equipped with rail guides, has been used as a switch engine to shuttle the small French freightcars about. There is an engineer rock-crushing plant on the post, and at the far end, an engineer sewage disposal plant.

About 1,300 French laborers worked on the post. All of them had to be engaged through the French government. Each morning and evening a convoy of thirty trucks would go out to carry the workers between their homes in Nancy, Toul, and neighboring towns, and the ordnance depot. Many of them were Algerians, and some of these were illiterate, and difficult to train to their jobs. Some did not have the physical strength for a full day of hard labor.

In February 1954 International Business Machines were installed here for maintaining stock records. Issues, receipts, and adjustments—both in quantities and in dollar values—were recorded on the cards. Within a few minutes the machines could turn out a report on the current status of supplies, a breakdown on supplies issued to the Air Force, or to allies under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program. The complete history of any given stock number could be turned out in about five minutes. At eight o'clock each morning availability cards would go to the stock control division. French civilians operated the IBM equipment and a technician from Holland kept it in order.

Equipment as valuable as trucks, tires, tubes, guns, and all kinds of spare parts requires close guarding. This was the job of a Polish guard company which maintained local security. These men had won a high reputation for their vigilance and attention to duty. At night the sentinels were reinforced by dogs, which had an organization all their own on the post. There were fifty-one of them—all German shepherds—present for duty. Each had his individual kennel among the neatly lined rows of doghouses inside a large wire enclosure. Some of them would dig a basement underneath in order to escape the heat. A Polish guard had a full-time job in looking after this dog company. He had an orderly room in an open pyramidal tent, and here each dog had his individual brush, chain, and muzzle hanging under his name. A kitchen, with refrigerator for preserving meat, a gasoline stove for heating it, and cabinets for meal adjoined to the rear. The dogs received their basic training in

Germany before being assigned to duty here. With the dogs on duty, petty thievery was less likely at night than in the daytime.

The major ammunition depot in the Advance Section was at Trois-Fontaines. Here all kinds of ammunition for the Army and the Air Force was stored in an area covering fifteen thousand acres, and a single company of Polish guards was charged with protecting the whole area. The depot moved into this site in March 1951, and it remained a tent camp until 1952 when semipermanent barracks and offices were constructed. These had to last another three to four years, until permanent buildings could be put up. Here soldiers volunteering for the task, using makeshift materials and tools, built a post chapel.

The principal quartermaster depot for the Advance Section was at Metz. A small detachment of the line of communication organization moved into Metz in November 1950. The first depot was organized as a subdepot of the Giessen (Germany) Quartermaster Depot in August 1951. In October of that year it came under direct control of European Command for the period of transition to an Advance Section depot. It became the Metz Quartermaster Depot in February 1952, and in December 1952 finally came under the control of the commanding general, Advance Section. It, in turn, had a number of satellite installations attached to it.

Headquarters for the Metz Quartermaster Depot in the caserne in the southeast section of Metz (Montigny). The main troop billets were at Tournebride, about two miles south of the city. There was primary storage for Class I (food), Class II (individual clothing and equipment), and Class IV (special purpose) supplies at the Woippy subdepot about seven miles north of Metz. In addition there was a cold storage area in Metz and another in Paris, gasoline and oil (POL) subdepots at Buzy and Pouilly, near Metz, and five gasoline and oil subdepots, three of which were operated under contract by Frenchmen, in the vicinity of Fontainebleau. These gasoline and oil subdepots were served by the long-delayed Donges—Metz pipeline.

After a tour of the Communications Zone in France in June 1954, the army's chief supply officer, General W. B. Palmer, Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, remarked that by now the U. S. Army Communications Zone in France had shaken down to a going concern. He thought the progress achieved after such difficult beginnings highly encouraging. Very significant quantities of supplies now were on hand, he said. Many of the depots now were beginning to shift from static to active supply functions. The living conditions of the soldiers were improving steadily. But not everything was satisfactory. The Nancy Ordnance Depot and the Trois-Fontaines Ordnance Ammunition Depot which had been rushed into existence under emergency conditions, still were unsatisfactory installations in his opinion.

He thought something should be done about the situation at Metz where the main storage areas were north of the city and the troop billets south of it. He was anxious to have further training and testing of equipment go on for unloading ships over the beaches, so that supplies would not be interrupted if the ports were bombed. General Palmer also warned against the concentration of too many activities at the ports, and he pointed to the "horrible examples" of Pusan and Bremerhaven. But on the whole the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics was well pleased with the logistical operations that he found in France.

Criticism came easily from Communists and other opponents of the return of the American Army to France in peacetime. Some saw it as another subjection of France to foreign occupation. It was said that France was losing her sovereignty. But on the other side there were those who saw great advantages in the American military activities in France. *La Vie Française* pointed out that ten thousand Frenchmen, in 1951, had found employment with the American Communications Zone. Traffic in the Atlantic ports had gained 150,000 tons during the year, and 100,000 tons of freight had been transported over the French railways at regular rates. Ruined buildings such as the Coligny Caserne in Orléans, the Maginot Caserne in Verdun, and the Auffredy Hospital in La Rochelle had been restored, and new ones constructed. Factories with idle machines and workers, such as those at Jeumont, the SNCASO in Bordeaux, and at Deols, the "Verdun Textiles," were working again. Industrial establishments had set up chains for spare parts and repairing. Expenditures for official expenses in France had provided about ten billion francs worth of dollar credit for the French economy, and private expenditures of soldiers and families had added that much again—and all without draining vital French resources, for the Americans had brought their own food and other necessities. "They help us twice: first by helping our defense, secondly by bettering the balance of our accounts. Thank you twice."

Aside from the various programs of material assistance to allies and apart from the Korean War, the establishment of the line of communication across France undoubtedly was the most significant development for U. S. Army logistics and strategy since the end of World War II. The implication now was crystal clear that the United States was not limiting itself to the strategy which had characterized so much postwar thinking—that in the event of war in Europe, American forces would retire behind the Pyrenees to await the liberation of France by bombs. Here was clear testimony that the United States intended to defend Germany and to make a major stand on the Rhine. Nothing could have been more encouraging to the French. At the same time, it bound France almost irrevocably

to the United States. Any temptation to neutralism is practically out of the question. If the United States becomes involved in a European war the French will be in it almost automatically. But the United States also is bound to France. The French hold a trump card which they have used before and may be expected to use again if the situation demands it—that is the American dependence upon the French for the security of the line of communication. When, in response to the threat which was developing in the Colmar pocket during the German counteroffensives in January 1945, General Eisenhower ordered the withdrawal of forces from Strasbourg, the one argument that General de Gaulle found carried enough force to persuade the Supreme Commander to countermand his order was the threat to the Allied line of communication which the resulting unrest among the French people might create.<sup>4</sup> This argument doubtless will continue to carry much weight with American commanders in Europe. But it is the firmest kind of arrangement among allies—one in which each depends upon the other in a way which, in a very real sense, is vital.

One of the significant elements of the American military line of communication which was being maintained across France a decade after the liberation was a revived Red Ball Express. But this reconstituted system of long-distance motor truck transportation bore little resemblance to its wartime predecessor. Organized late in 1952 primarily to provide training for personnel, and to maintain the nucleus of a system which could be expanded rapidly in case of war, the new Red Ball Express was operating on a small scale and carrying a relatively small percentage of the goods being delivered to American forces in Germany. With the advantage of considered planning free of the pressures of an immediate emergency, and with the benefit of the experience of World War II, logistics officers now were able to put into operation a system of the kind which they had been able only to wish for in 1944.

The World War II Red Ball Express had been brought into operation hastily in August 1944 to speed essential supplies to the east when the war-damaged French railroads proved to be completely inadequate to the task of supplying the First and Third armies as they raced across France in pursuit of the beaten and disorganized German divisions. Whatever trucks could be spared were pressed into service for this mission. Most of them were the two-and-a-half-ton 6 x 6 cargo carriers. The express trucks operated on a one-way return loop highway system in which the roads were reserved exclusively for Red Ball traffic. At first the system operated between

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<sup>4</sup> See Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York, 1948), 362-63; General De Lattre de Tassigny, *Histoire de la Première Armée Française, Rhin et Danube* (Paris, 1949), 344-58.

Saint-Lô and Chartres, with eastbound traffic going by way of Vire, Domfront, Alençon, Mortagne and Le Loupe, and with return traffic following a parallel route to the south from Chartres to Nogent-le-Rotrou, Bellême, Villaines-la-Juhel, Mayenne, Mortain, and Tessy-sur-Vire. After September 10 the route was more than doubled. Then the northern, eastbound route went by way of Vire, Argentan, and Freux to Versailles where it divided. From Versailles one fork went to the north of Paris, through Saint-Denis, to Soissons, for the support of the First Army, and the other fork went to the south of Paris through Melun and Esternay to Sommesous for the support of the Third Army. For the return trip trucks went from Soissons southward through Château-Thierry to Fontainebleau where they joined the route for trucks returning from Sommesous by way of Arcis-sur-Aube and Nogent-sur-Seine. From Fontainebleau the Red Ball trucks proceeded by way of Chartres, Mortagne, Alençon, and Mortain back to Saint Lô. Bivouac areas were located about midway along each route so that each driver had to make only one half of a full one-way trip, while of course the trucks went the whole distance.

Although it was not to be doubted that the World War II Red Ball Express served a useful—indeed essential—purpose, obvious shortcomings soon appeared in its operation. A remarkable record of achievement in delivering supplies might have been even more remarkable if advance planning at all levels had anticipated the need of depending to such a great extent on motor transportation for supplying two armies engaged in such a rapid pursuit across France. It was not that the possibility had been ignored. It simply had not impressed itself sufficiently upon officers of higher headquarters to claim a high priority for men and equipment in competition with all the other demands pressing upon harried staffs as they completed plans for the greatest amphibious invasion in history.

In addition to the lack of heavy-duty trucks and semitrailers and the difficulties of finding trained drivers, other defects in the Red Ball Express as it was organized and operated under the improvisation necessary in 1944 somewhat sapped its effectiveness. One of the greatest of these defects was lack of traffic control. Throughout the operation of this express freight service, military police were not available in sufficient numbers to police the route, and control over convoys and coordination among various headquarters was very loose. Red Ball drivers paid little attention to the twenty-five-miles-an-hour speed limit, and it was reported that British soldiers advised that in order to avoid an American convoy it was necessary not only to get off the road, but to climb a tree! All trucks were supposed to move in company-strength convoys, but such convoys soon were exceptional on the Red Ball route.

A further weakness in control over the World War II Red Ball Express was the lack of a centralized administrative organization. Each of the territorial sections held some responsibilities for the part of the Red Ball system which passed through its area. This led inevitably to certain abuses. Frequently convoys would arrive at regulating points or even at supposed final destinations with little or no advance notice of expected time of arrival. Officers in the army areas often would send Red Ball trucks far beyond the terminals for the system to make local deliveries to division dumps. Sometimes convoy commanders arrived at destinations only to find that depots or other installations had closed while the trucks were en route, and then it became a matter of finding some unit willing to accept the supplies so that the trucks could be unloaded and hurried back to Saint-Lô to pick up more essential supplies. In the days when supplies of all kinds were becoming scarce for the pursuing armies, supply officers were moved more than ever to put into practice an old expedient to get supplies wherever they could find them. It was said that one army sometimes would "steal" whole convoys from the other, when a colonel would station himself on the highway and, informing the convoy commander that the destination had been changed, would wave the convoy off in the direction of his own depleted dumps. Worse was the temptation for personal gain to which some drivers yielded. Disregarding the needs of soldiers battling up front, and taking advantage of the loose control exercised over them, some drivers sold their cargoes on the French black market.

Still another serious defect was the lack of proper maintenance for vehicles. Almost continuous use of vehicles for long hours over all kinds of roads, and often carrying heavy overloads, made it virtually impossible for the inadequate repair facilities which were available to keep the trucks rolling. Drivers were bound to become careless about preventive maintenance—about looking after proper servicing for the trucks—when no one had continuous responsibility for any one truck, and when no single authority could give continuous supervision. When drivers were out for several days at a time on long trips, company commanders were able to exert little control over them. The strain of extreme fatigue and the lack of close supervision sometimes had even more unfortunate consequences. Undoubtedly driver fatigue contributed to accidents. It also led to malingering and even sabotage. Some drivers were known to tamper with the motors of their trucks for the purpose of so disabling them that they had to drop out of their convoys.

The defects of the World War II Red Ball Express had not been unanticipated by the officers responsible for its operation. Yet they had been helpless to make adequate preparation. If any such system were to operate with any greater effectiveness in the future, it would

be necessary to make careful plans—and establish more satisfactory priorities for vehicles—well in advance. This was done for the revived Red Ball Express of the 1950's.

After the organization of the new American line of communication across France, transportation officers began to make specific their plans for a future version of the Red Ball Express. By early 1952 thinking along these lines had "jelled" sufficiently to include these recommendations: (1) That provision be made for the use of semitrailers, so that a shuttle system could be made the basis for the whole operation; (2) that selected two-way routes be substituted for the one-way loop system used previously, so that the distances would be kept at a minimum; (3) that trailer transfer points and bivouac areas be so located that drivers could return to their own companies each day or two days for rest and maintenance work on their vehicles; (4) that centralized control over the whole system be maintained by a single headquarters regardless of the territorial boundaries of Communications Zone sections; and (5) that the central headquarters keep close account of the movements of all vehicles and cargoes.<sup>2</sup>

The recommended changes essentially were put into practice when the revived Red Ball Express went into operation across France in November 1952. Control over the whole operation was centralized in the 9th Transportation Group Headquarters, with headquarters at Orléans. The 9th Group was the highway transportation arm for the Communications Zone. Now the Red Ball system was not subject to the control of Communications Zone section commanders through whose territory it passed.

Equipped with semitrailer-tractor-truck combinations, the Red Ball Express was based upon a trailer transfer system about which World War II transportation officers could only dream. Under this system the tractor-trucks remained with assigned drivers and were never more than two days away from their home stations, while the trailers, transferred from one tractor to another, went the full distance. The operation was comparable to the handling of freight cars on railroads. Trailers were loaded and pulled to a marshaling yard where convoys were made up. Then they moved in convoy a single day's journey to a trailer transfer point where the original tractors left them to be picked up by others for the next leg of the trip. The first drivers then picked up trailers headed in the opposite direction and returned to their original stations. In their absence other trailers were being loaded, and soon they were ready to begin the cycle over again.

<sup>2</sup> Lt. Col. Page H. Slaughter, "Substituting the 'Speed Ball' for the 'Red Ball,'" *National Defense Transportation Journal*, May-June 1952, pp. 24-26.



The system had a number of obvious advantages. Time was saved in loading, because the trailers could be loaded while the tractors were out on the road with another load. The transportation company commander could maintain much closer supervision over his men, because they were away from their units for relatively short periods of time. This further gave the drivers an opportunity to look after the servicing of their vehicles, and the commanders were able to supervise the maintenance work. In addition the close supervision and checking by the central headquarters and the records kept by the local units, as well as the fact that drivers habitually traveled relatively small segments of a route and so became thoroughly familiar with the roads to which they were assigned, made the diversion of trucks and cargoes away from their destinations a most unlikely prospect.

A big schematic diagram on the wall of the operations room at 9th Group Headquarters indicated the layout of the system. Convoys carrying supplies for units in Germany from the west coast of France generally were made up at Bussac or at La Rochelle, and the trailers were moved by way of the transfer points at Orléans and Toul. Supplies bound to or from installations at Chinon, Rochefort, Bordeaux, Captieux, Périgueux and Braconne ordinarily went through Bussac. Poitiers and the air force base at Châteauroux were served both through Bussac and through Orléans. Orleans also was the point through which passed supplies moving by Red Ball to or from Saumur, Dreux, Paris, and Fontainebleau. Stations at Laon and Chaumont received and dispatched cargoes both through Orléans and Toul. Again Toul was the transfer point for trailers bound to or from Germany, and to or from Verdun, Metz, Étain, and Nancy. On the big chart small cut-outs of trucks were tacked to show the number of trucks, loaded and empty, which actually were out on each leg of the route at the particular time. Other charts, covered with acetate overlays, showed the total number of loaded trailers en route at a given time, the number of loaded trailers in marshaling yards, and the missions of the units assigned to the Red Ball operation.

In the group headquarters at Orléans Captain A. L. Matthews, the traffic coordinator, kept close watch over all the trailers assigned to the organization, and over the movement of cargoes. On the basis of daily reports submitted from each trailer transfer point or marshaling yard, a central card locator file was maintained. Each trailer was assigned a code letter and number which was painted on the trailer itself, and which appeared on the card for that trailer in the central file. The cards constituted a permanent file which could be used to trace any cargo which had failed to arrive at its destination.

The movement of American military convoys over French roads in peacetime required one further step in coordination which was not a matter of serious concern in wartime—road clearance from the

French authorities. It was necessary to obtain a French road clearance for any convoy of four or more vehicles. It required ordinarily from twenty-four to forty-eight hours to obtain the clearance after application had been made for it, though in case of urgency it was possible to obtain clearance more quickly. This gave to the police officials information upon which they could anticipate special efforts which might be needed for the control of traffic.

The vehicles used for the new Red Ball Express were five-ton 6 x 6 tractor trucks with twelve-ton stake-and-platform semitrailers. This was a far cry from the light two-and-a-half-ton trucks used during World War II. Yet many seriously questioned the efficiency of using these trucks for long-haul freight service. Actually the truck companies assigned to the Red Ball Express were supposed to have lighter 4 x 2 cab-over-engine tractors which would have been more economical for general highway use. But the bigger tractors were available, while the others were not.

Probably the best way to see just how the new Red Ball Express operated is to follow a particular trailer on the first leg of its trip from the French coast across France to its destination in Germany. For our purpose we pick up the trailer designated C-51, scheduled to leave La Rochelle on a Monday.

Down at Bussac on Friday Corporal Winifred W. Haskins, a driver in Captain George Scott's 78th Transportation (medium-truck) Company is looking forward to celebrating his birthday. Private Carl D. Caldwell is making plans for spending the weekend in Bordeaux. Pfc. Denis Kohles is waiting to see what turns up. A call from the sergeant sets new plans for all three. They are to get their tractors ready, pick up a trailer each to pull to La Rochelle, where they will pick up loaded trailers for a run to Orléans on Monday. The change in schedule was the result of a telephone call from Captain P. W. Scarpone, chief of the highway transportation section in base section headquarters at La Rochelle, who in turn was responding to a call from Captain Matthews at group headquarters at Orléans.

Meanwhile other activity is being set in motion at La Rochelle. Captain Daniel Leary receives a call from base section headquarters inquiring how many trailers loaded with goods from his consolidated delivery service will be ready to go Monday morning. He will have three. Henri Machefaux, a French clerk who has made himself indispensable in keeping records and preparing documents down at the consolidated delivery service warehouse, gets the necessary papers ready—the waybills and manifests for each shipment and for each load. The task of looking after the details in getting everything ready falls to Sergeant Johnnie D. Rutledge of Memphis, Tennessee, and Sergeant George Ratliff of Praise, Kentucky.

Sergeant Ratliff is the liaison man between 78th Transportation company headquarters at Bussac and the Consolidated Delivery Service. He runs the trailer marshaling yard near the warehouse where convoys are made up. He is the man responsible for dispatching the vehicles. He gives a receipt for each trailer coming in, and obtains a receipt for each one going out. Each morning at eight o'clock he reports to his company headquarters at Bussac all trailers received or dispatched. Now Sergeant Ratliff checks on the drivers who are to be available for the run scheduled for Monday. When the three who have been designated to pull trailers up from Bussac arrive, on Saturday, he shows them where to park those trailers, and spots the loaded ones which are to be picked up for the Monday morning trip. Corporal Haskins hooks up his tractor to the trailer designated C-51. Pfc. Kohles picks up a trailer designated C-5, and Private Caldwell takes trailer A-47. After satisfying themselves that the loads check, the drivers sign all four copies of the waybills. In this case fifteen different waybills were necessary to cover the load on trailer C-51. The driver kept the first and second copies—the first to be given to the consignee at the time of delivery, and the second to be returned to the dispatcher after being signed by the consignee—the shipper, in this case the consolidated delivery service, mailed the third copy to the consignee, and retained the fourth copy for its own files. This done, the three drivers drove their tractors, pulling the designated trailers, out to Laleu, a military post near La Pallice where many of the men assigned to the La Rochelle area are quartered, to await the time for departure on Monday.

Trailer C-51 is carrying 174 pieces of miscellaneous freight weighing a total of 18,204 pounds. It is a load made up of shipments picked up in several places within base section bound for several places in Germany. It includes shipments from Bassens Port Battalion for the Rhine Engineer Depot at Esselsfuert-Lager, the Rhine Medical Depot at Eisiedlerhoff, for the Mannheim Ordnance Depot, and for the Sembach Air Base; shipments picked up at Bussac are going to the 7th Army Chemical Depot at Baimholder-Pfalz and to Mannheim-Rheinau; a shipment from the Fontenet Ordnance Depot is going to the Rhine Engineer Depot; shipments of household goods and baggage from the warehouse in La Rochelle are consigned to the transportation officer at Einsiedlerhoff, Anschluss Gleis, and Vogelweh. According to the manifest, trailer C-51, originating at the La Rochelle district consolidated delivery service warehouse, is to go to the transportation officer, Western Area Command, Vogelweh, Germany. The second trailer, C-5, is carrying eight pieces of miscellaneous household goods weighing 7,565 pounds to the Orléans Area Command. The third, A-47, is carrying 208 pieces weighing 19,727 pounds; it is block-loaded for Orléans and Verdun.

On Monday Sergeant Ratliff is up before dawn. He sees that the three drivers are up early, too. They go at once to the mess hall for a big breakfast of fried eggs, bacon, fried potatoes, toast, and coffee, pick up sack lunches for their noon meal, and get ready to take off. Some delay develops when there is difficulty with the military police involving the driving of one of the big five-ton tractors through the downtown section of La Rochelle, contrary to local rules which have been established at the insistence of the French. At 6:20 o'clock—twenty minutes behind schedule—the three-truck convoy pulls out of the gate at Laleu and onto the narrow black-top highway. At crossroads and villages the drivers keep alert for cars and bicycles, and they are careful to sound their horns with great frequency at such places in order to assure themselves the right-of-way. Soon the drivers are settled into the monotony of the ride. The engine roar is so loud that conversation is practically impossible—except for Private Caldwell who has fixed up a special muffler for his tractor which has some effect. Even if one is tempted to sleep, it is almost impossible in the noisy, rough cab. The bouncing of the truck on its heavy-duty tires lengthens each mile and each hour for all who ride. Otherwise the convoy moves steadily and smoothly along.

Corporal Haskins, a colored noncommissioned officer from Durham, North Carolina, is out in front with C-51; he is the convoy commander. A truck driver in civilian life, too, he has been in the army twenty-two months, and in France for a year. He is sufficiently satisfied that he intends to re-enlist when his current term expires. Second in the column is Pfc. Kohles who before joining the army had been a fireman in Earling, Iowa. He has been in the army sixteen months and in France ten. Private Caldwell, bringing up the rear with A-47, had been working in the shipping department of the Continental Can Company plant in Davenport, Florida, before being called to military service. He has served thirteen months, in France nine months. None of these drivers so far has had an accident—and driving in France for nine months to a year without an accident is an achievement in itself.

At 8:10 the convoy passes noisily through Niort, and half an hour later stops along the roadside for a ten-minute break. The drivers lose no time in breaking into their lunch sacks for a pressed ham or cheese sandwich. Back on the road, the trucks roll on northward and eastward. Arriving at the outskirts of Poitiers at 10:40, the convoy makes its way up to the Caserne Abeville, overlooking the city, by 11 o'clock. Here the trucks stop for gasoline—a stop that is not always necessary if tanks are full before leaving La Rochelle—at the U.S. army post which now occupies the caserne. A half-hour stop here gives the drivers an opportunity to go to the snack bar where they refresh themselves with ice cream or soft drinks. Leaving at 11:30, another three-truck Red Ball Express convoy falls in behind

this one; it had left Bussac about the same time that the first had left La Rochelle.

They pass through Châtellerault at 12:30, and then at 12:55 stop along the road just outside the big Ingrandes Quartermaster Depot for lunch. Corporal Haskins finds that his accelerator is sticking and he pulls into the quartermaster depot to see if he can get it fixed; he finds someone who gives it several shots of oil, and he decides to go on with it. Meanwhile, the others eat ham-and-cheese sandwiches and wash them down with gulps from tall cans of pineapple juice and tomato juice. Haskins hurriedly eats a sandwich, and at 1:30 P.M. the convoy is underway again.

From Tours the convoy goes up the picturesque valley of the Loire—through the celebrated châteaux country. Interrupted only by a ten-minute break along the river at 4:20, the convoy moves steadily onward. The trucks are on the same route that the right column of General Patton's Third Army followed in the race across France in pursuit of the broken German forces in 1944. Now the heavy army trucks, rumbling through the narrow streets of medieval towns, double-clutching up the slopes, and keeping up a steady hum on open highways, awaken in French citizens the bittersweet nostalgia of liberation and the chilling dread of occupation. Veteran officers and men feel a strange, vague sensation of having been through all this before.

At 6:45 the convoy enters the city limits of Orléans. In a display reminiscent of World War II, the school children wave and make the "V for victory" sign, and ask for chewing gum. Fifteen minutes later the convoy arrives at the marshaling yard at the suburb of Seran. The trucks from Bussac come in immediately behind. It is the end of a day's run of 220 miles.

Immediately there is a flurry of activity in the marshaling yard. Two noncommissioned officers are in charge of operations here today. Corporal Robert F. Kafka of Detroit, Michigan, serves as checker. He checks the lights, tires, and general condition of each trailer, and sees that repairs are made where necessary. Then he directs the parking of the trailers in the already crowded lot. Corporal Kafka and a detachment of men have to work this evening until 9:30 o'clock. The convoy arriving from Bussac immediately behind us has to be checked, and another convoy coming in from Toul, moving in the opposite direction; four tires have to be changed on the trailers. Meanwhile Corporal William N. Barbuto of Akron, Ohio, handles the paper work in the little shed which serves as an operations room. First he makes an entry for each trailer in his card file which shows the arrival and departure of each trailer coming to the yard, and how many days it has been in the yard. Then he turns to his typewriter and records each trailer's arrival on the morning report. This report will go to 9th Group Headquarters as of

eight o'clock tomorrow morning. Next Corporal Barbuto picks up a grease pencil to note on an acetate wall chart the arrival of each trailer. On the chart he writes the number of each trailer, the point of origin of its load, the destination, the type of cargo it is carrying, initials of the checker, date received, and which company is scheduled to pull out the trailer for the next leg of its journey. Under the heading for trailer C-51 he writes "CDS, La Rochelle," "Vogelweh," "Pipes and Misc.," "RFK" (for Corporal Kafka, the checker), the date, and "651st" (truck company stationed at Toul which will pick up this trailer). Corporal Barbuto gives a receipt to the convoy commander for the trailers brought in and then checks the papers which he receives for each driver—manifest, waybills, and, for trailers bound for Germany as is the case of C-51, customs clearance form. These papers he will pass on to the drivers who pick up the trailers in the morning.

C-51 is scheduled to join four other loaded trailers in the morning to go to Toul with five drivers of the 651st Transportation (medium truck) Company who arrived at Orléans this evening. Three loaded trailers await the three drivers who came to Orléans today from La Rochelle.

The trip to Toul covers 236 miles. The convoy arrives there at 4:10 P.M. It has a one-day layover, pulls out the next morning at 8:20 for the final lap. Its destination is Vogelweh, Germany. It passes through Nancy a short time later, is in Sarreguemines about eleven A.M., and crosses the frontier into the Saar within the next half hour. The convoy arrives at Vogelweh, just outside Kaiserslautern, site of the headquarters of the Western Area Command, at four P.M.

Facilities at Vogelweh contrast greatly with those at La Rochelle or Orléans or Toul in France. Crowded marshaling yards and dusty encampments and makeshift barracks here have given way to spacious paved yards and permanent buildings which form part of a big military post. Marshaling-yard activities are controlled from an operations room set up in a trailer parked at one side of the yard.

Properly speaking, the Red Ball Express ends at the French border; it is a Communications Zone operation, and as such is separate from operations of the American forces in Germany. But the mission of the Red Ball Express is to get supplies to the forces in Germany, and of course close coordination with truck units in Germany is necessary to make the system effective. The 83rd Company is charged with linking up with the Red Ball system, and, for practical purposes, extending it to Vogelweh. Actually the trailer transfer system is continued on through the areas of Germany where American troops and depots are located. There is another trailer transfer point at Mannheim where a company serving the Seventh Army is stationed, and there are two or three other transfer points

for local deliveries and for consolidation of loads of goods to be shipped back to the west.

On Friday morning, the day after arrival, trailer C-51 is sent to the rail transportation officer, Kaiserslautern, where a part of the shipment is unloaded, and then, the same day, it goes to the Rhine Engineer Depot for further unloading. No trans-shipment by smaller trucks is necessary; the trailer is pulled around in turn to the places where goods are to be delivered. On Monday trailer C-51 is returned empty to the Vogelweh marshaling yard. Early the next day it is sent to the Nahbollenback Quartermaster Depot to be loaded. At 5:15 that same evening, Tuesday, it is received back at the Vogelweh trailer transfer point with a load of equipment for the engineer depot at Chinon, France. Three days later, Friday, at seven A.M., trailer C-51 leaves with a convoy for Toul.

Shipment by Red Ball Express was considerably faster, during the 1950's, than by the French railroads. It took only five days for trailer C-51 to go from La Rochelle across France to Germany and be unloaded at its destination. The average time for a trailer to reach Germany from the French coast was about eight days. Ordinarily it was necessary to wait at Orléans and Toul for convoys to be made up; but in emergencies, the Red Ball Express could take a trailer across France in forty hours. The average time for a shipment to go across France on the French railroads was two weeks. But most American military supplies went by rail. The Red Ball Express was not intended to compete with railway transportation. On the contrary, it had primarily a training mission. Its job was to deliver about a hundred tons of supplies a day, as an average, to Germany and vice versa. Its goal was efficiency, but it was not in competition with the French railroad in attempting to set records for hauling high tonnage. The Red Ball Express was the nucleus of what could become a much bigger system in an emergency.

## 9

### Americans and Frenchmen

That the return of the Americans to Orléans has made an imprint on the city is obvious to anyone who visits there. The American military convoys that rumble through the outskirts, and single trucks that pass frequently through the center of the city, the olive-drab military busses that follow regular routes through the streets and squares, the large number of American automobiles parked along the streets approaching Caserne Coligny, groups of American soldiers on the sidewalks and in the cafés and restaurants—all these testify to the presence of the American Army in Orléans again. But the city is large enough to accept a strong imprint of American influence without being swamped by the number of soldiers stationed there. Though many soldiers continue to wear their uniforms when in town on pass, they are instructed to wear civilian clothes whenever possible in order not to create an impression of unduly large numbers.

American soldiers especially frequent the cafés along the Rue de la Gare, the restaurants on Place Albert I, the snack bar and American bar on Place Martroi. Mostly they travel in small groups of two to four, or alone, and are not often seen in the company of French people. Some soldiers say that the people of Orléans are more reserved, and more difficult to get acquainted with than those of any other place they have been stationed. A soldier from California came into the American snack bar—a French establishment catering to the soldier trade—and spoke enthusiastically to the operator about his recent leave to Nice, on the Riviera. "The people down there sure treat you fine," he said. "It sure is different in Orléans. Maybe there are too many Americans here." The restaurant man did not think that was it—but as operator of an American snack bar, he probably never would have agreed that there were too many Ameri-



cans in Orléans. On the wall he had posted his menu—Hamburger, pommes frites, 250 francs; Escalope Liègeoise, 280; Lamb cutlet, 260; . . . Summer Dream, 280; Aisiette Anglaise, 280; Jambon de Paris, 180; . . . Fried chicken, pommes frites, 400; . . . Hamburger, 160; Hot Dog, 90. He tried a milkshake with ice instead of ice cream, and he had ginger ale, soft drinks, and imported beer. He also had mixed drinks—140 francs for a dry Martini or White Lady, 160 for a champagne cocktail, 220 for a Manhattan, and 370 for an Old Fashioned. And he had such local favorites as cognac at 100 to 130 francs, rum at 80, Calvados at 80, mirabelle at 130 and vodka at 130.

The American Bar is a very picturesque place at the corner of Rue Bannier and Place du Martroi where attractive waitresses, speaking good English, serve American liquors and mixed drinks. The French patronize the place too, but they seem outnumbered by Americans.

A big sergeant walked into a restaurant on Place Albert I, and found a table on the sidewalk terrace. He glanced quickly over the long French menu which the waiter put into his hands, and then he turned and said, "Bring me a steak about that thick." The waiter complied promptly.

It generally is assumed that the French frequently assist American units by providing facilities which they need, but sometimes the American military units also provide very real assistance for communities where they are stationed. Some time ago the failure of its electric pump left Laferte, a town of about four thousand people south of Orléans, without water. Immediately the 982nd Engineer Construction Battalion, stationed at Maison Fort, went to work to get mobile water-purification units into operation. Until that equipment could be put into service at a nearby stream, the Americans engineers trucked water to the town with a 1,500-gallon tanker. Soon they were able to supply up to 3,000 gallons of chlorinated water an hour from the two collapsible tanks which they set up at the water point. This continued until the town's own water supply could be restored.

What is true of the impact of American troops on Orléans, and the life which American service families have found there, is true in greater or lesser degree in towns and cities near American military installations all across France.

Sometimes people criticize the American Army for isolating itself from the local population in foreign countries where it is stationed, for carrying its civilization with it, for confining recreational activities so largely to army theaters and army service clubs, completely apart from the local community. Yet this may be the best way to avoid friction with the local population. It reduces the num-

ber who are likely to become involved in café brawls or arguments, it reduces the competition with Frenchmen for local resources, and makes it possible to find recreation in American facilities so that only those who want to or need to go to town for their diversion.

Another continuing problem for American commanders in France has been the finding of civilian workers and technicians, American or French, to fill all the jobs which are essential to keep the line of communication functioning properly. The limitations on family housing and other local facilities such as schools and shopping areas have discouraged many civilian employees of the Department of the Army from accepting jobs in France. At the same time the reservoir of trained workers which had been built up in Germany when all the supplies were coming in through Bremerhaven have had to be replaced with Frenchmen or other workers brought into the area by technical service units transferred to France. But employment has been high in France itself, and few skilled workers are to be found for the various clerical, machine-records, accounting, and materials-handling tasks that have to be done. The French government purposely discourages the payment of wages which would attract essential workers from business and industry where they are thought to be needed for the French economy. And during his tour of American installations in Europe in 1954, General Palmer scolded army leaders for losing to the air force skilled civilians, because of a disposition on the part of the army to "tie itself in security knots" which the air force did not consider necessary.

As for unskilled workers, a great many Algerians were responding to job opportunities in this category. Some local papers have suggested that a new lower class of Frenchmen has been established in France by jobs offered at American installations. Some American commanders were reluctant to hire Algerians because their loyalty to France was uncertain or because they tend to drift from one place to another. But without any alternatives, Algerians continue to be employed in large numbers at several American installations—possibly to better effect with time and experience.

American soldiers in France (and at other overseas locations) were paid in scrip called Military Payment Certificates (MPC's), and they had to exchange their dollars for this scrip when they entered the country. The MPC's were valid only in American military establishments such as post exchanges, snack bars, service clubs, commissaries, and officers' clubs, and this was the only kind of currency that was valid there. Since only American military personnel and their dependents, and American civilian employees attached to the armed forces were permitted to have MPC's, this tended to limit the use of post exchanges and other American military facilities to people authorized to use them. On the other hand,

soldiers were not supposed to have in their possession more than ten dollars in regular United States currency, unless they were going on leave to a country where MPC's were not used. This tended to discourage the use of dollars in black-market operations. Scrip might be exchanged for francs at the official rate of exchange at the army finance office, or, at a rate slightly lower at the local American Express office, but francs could not be exchanged for MPC's. The Military Payment Certificates were changed from time to time on short notice, when all old scrip had to be turned in for new certificates of a different design. Again this was an attempt to curb counterfeiting and black-market operations.

In spite of efforts to prevent it, military scrip did fall into the hands of Frenchmen, and there were, inevitably, some small-scale black-market operations. MPC's made it inconvenient for French civilians to obtain things from the post exchanges, but it was not especially difficult. A Frenchman had only to maintain close liaison with an American soldier who would act as his purchasing agent, and Frenchmen who accepted MPC's, and saved them to make major purchases in the post exchanges, had only to be sure to maintain close contact so that a soldier friend could turn in the old scrip whenever any new issue was made. Soldiers who neglected to get sufficient francs at the finance office or American Express for their needs frequently were willing to give MPC's to people on the streets at a rate of less than two-thirds their actual value. Some of them complained bitterly about the official rate of exchange, and some of them went to great lengths to add 5 per cent to the francs they got for a dollar—then they go to the streets and accept 35 per cent less.

The monthly military payroll in the Orléans Area Command amounted to about \$900,000, after deductions and allotments. The finance office exchanged about \$250,000 for francs—in addition to the francs sold by the American Express Company. Many men joined a monthly "salary pool" in order to get more francs for their dollars. After payday, they put all the money they could spare into a pool, and then someone took all of it to Switzerland where a more favorable rate of exchange could be found. Since Switzerland was a country where there were no American military installations, so that MPC's were not used there, the man going on leave to that country might carry all the regular U. S. dollars that he wished. Though the soldiers spent freely, they were sensitive to prices and income. A sergeant talking to a warrant officer in Orléans one day said, "In Germany you could stretch five dollars out and make it last a while. In France five dollars won't last any time."

"Well, I guess if you have to be stationed in France this probably is the best place of any—here or Paris."

"I wouldn't want to be stationed in Paris; everything is too expensive."

Some officers insisted that the rate of exchange was not realistic; that is what made the prices seem so high. "The way it is, we are backing the French economy." Some apparently persuaded themselves that the rate of exchange was established deliberately by the French in anticipation of the arrival of the American soldiers with their big payrolls.

Spoiled by lavish living in Germany, many soldiers transferred to France, where frequently they found themselves billeted in tents in muddy fields or forests, with little in the way of recreational facilities or ordinary conveniences, soon became dissatisfied. Boredom, fed on isolation, and too infrequently mollified by individual resourcefulness, tended to turn to dislike of France and of the French people. The word soon got back to the United States, so that even yet, soldiers ordered to Europe utter fervent hopes that their destination will turn out to be Germany rather than France. On the other hand the French are not always enthusiastic about having large numbers of American soldiers in their midst.

One of the principal causes for ill-feeling already has been suggested—the housing shortage. This has led to discontent on both sides. American soldiers encamped out in some mudhole could not be expected to be happy with their lot when they recalled the clean barracks and finished posts which were available in Germany. Soldiers whose families could not accompany them here, or who, when they did arrive, were forced to live in tiny, far-removed rooms after long and frustrating searches, could not be expected to be enthusiastic. At the same time, this also was a main point of discontent on the part of Frenchmen. French people, too, faced long, frustrating searches for housing, and when American officers and noncommissioned officers moved into their towns and cities and took every free living space at high rates, the French who can get no housing could not be expected to be happy with the situation either. It was unfortunate that the obvious solution to the problem—the program of construction of apartment houses for American families with the backing of a United States guarantee—had to be so long delayed. Yet guarantees and financial arrangements could not produce houses overnight. Even had agreement on such a program been obtained at the very outset, there would have been delays, because such a great share of the French construction industries and building materials were devoted to the reconstruction of war-devastated towns and cities.

Another source of irritation arose in the use of French labor in American installations. A local prefect said that the trouble was that the army was trying to treat the French workers like American workers, and their ways of doing things are different. An officer

arriving for a conference from U. S. Army headquarters at Heidelberg, commented that in Germany now they are getting very close to stateside productivity, "but to mention this to local French officials is like setting off an atomic bomb."

Criticisms of France and the French heard among soldiers of the American army in France during the 1950's and 1960's also were common in World War I and World War II. On both those occasions it was common to hear a preference expressed for Germany, the defeated enemy, over France, the ally, when American forces moved across the border. It is quite likely that the attitudes expressed by veterans of the Rhineland occupation of 1918 and 1919 influenced the attitudes of soldiers who reached Germany by way of France in World War II, and attitudes growing out of both wars undoubtedly had had an effect on the attitudes of American soldiers now in France. For soldiers who had lived in temporary shelters, or in the trenches in France, who had engaged in great battles across shell-torn fields, barbed-wire entanglements, and machine-gun-infested woods in World War I, Germany, left untouched by battle, where the Army of Occupation found pleasant quarters in the towns and devoted themselves to training and recreation and patrolling, was bound to leave a more favorable impression than was France. Again, at the end of World War II, when one compares casualty rates in Normandy or Lorraine with those in Germany, and when one adds such considerations as the dispersal of companies away from higher control in attractive towns of southwest Germany after the cessation of hostilities; the warm weather and good shelter in contrast with the mud and cold rain and snow and foxholes of the campaign in Lorraine; and above all, the absence of gunfire, and an opportunity for sports as well as training, it could hardly be expected that a combat soldier would have found France more enjoyable than Germany.

Moreover there always tends to be a certain amount of rivalry between allies. A defeated enemy can be compelled to do things; an ally has to be persuaded. As Major General Fox Conner once observed, "Dealing with the enemy is a simple and straightforward matter when contrasted with securing close cooperation with an ally." This rivalry extends to the soldiers themselves, and may express itself in competition for the favor of women, for limited stocks of beer, or resentment over the lack of appreciation for the importance of their military or economic contributions. It is curious how Americans are impressed with the extent of lend-lease assistance to France during World War II, of Marshall Plan aid, and of the significance of recent material assistance under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program. Their pride in these contributions is justified, but often they fail to recall the American dependence on French and British material in World War I—except for four naval guns

on railway mounts, General Pershing's American First Army never fired an American-made cannon or shell, and never used an American-made tank—nor do they note that the wars in Indochina and Algeria cost the French more than all the aid they received.

Possibly there is a certain amount of psychological egotism at work in tendencies to inflate the capabilities and importance of enemies, and to depreciate allies. One's own importance is elevated of course if everyone can be persuaded that the enemy just defeated was very strong indeed, and that the allies who assisted us in this great accomplishment really were quite weak and were able to contribute very little.

At the same time people may find things in Germany, or other countries, which they do sincerely prefer to what they find in France. But preference is no reason for scorn, and local problems, often very complex in nature, are no cause for belittling.

While little points of irritation have been allowed to develop among American soldiers in France, the French, for their part, unfortunately, have been able to find increasing reason for resentment against the Americans. This attitude is not likely to appear at all on the surface to an American tourist, but a reading of French newspapers, and frank conversations with French citizens confirm the fact that feelings of resentment and even hostility have been growing during the last several years. Some speak of the new American "Army of Occupation," and they say how different it is now from the liberation army of 1944 and 1945. Then Frenchmen and Americans greeted each other with great enthusiasm. When it became possible, American soldiers were frequent visitors in French homes. Now this free contact has become relatively infrequent.

Undoubtedly the behavior of some American soldiers in France at times irritates the local population. To a casual observer in Orléans the conduct of American soldiers in public places appears to be above reproach. But there is criticism at various times and places. Perhaps the one heard most frequently was voiced by a French telephone operator of Bordeaux—"The GI's drink too much. Always, after payday, every night for a week, the MP's have to come and drag them in."

An American major stationed at Verdun said that he believed that relations between the American soldiers and the French population were improving. "The longer the troops stay near a town, and the more money they pour into it, the more acceptable they become," he observed.

Some of the French inhabitants resent the post exchanges which American military residents patronize. Earlier, when goods were short, these were necessary, they agree, but now that French shops are well-stocked with everything, local merchants—echoing their

counterparts in the United States—cannot understand why they should not have this business.

On the other hand some of the French professional people complain that American service families do not pay their bills. In three different instances recently, one doctor reported that he had treated Americans who never had paid their bills, and their superior officers exerted no pressure to induce them to do so. (In the United States it usually is assumed that a serviceman is a good credit risk because his superior officers will insist that he meet his obligations.)

It is said that the Americans try to cover up the criminal acts of their men—that American military organizations are more interested in protecting their men than in helping to protect the civil population from their men, or in seeing that justice is done. According to one story, a Frenchman was killed supposedly by an American soldier, but when the police arrived to investigate, bullets had been scattered all over the area to make it more difficult to find the one which killed the man.

There is another problem which nearly always arises when a foreign army arrives in a populous community, but the serious human consequences may have an especially unfortunate impact among allies.

Nicole never had seen her father. But she wondered about him frequently. And she remembered how her mother had explained that he was an American soldier whose airplane had gone down into the sea. But why did she never get a letter or a birthday card, or a Christmas gift—or why had she received no card at the time of her confirmation—from her grandmother and grandfather who lived in America?

Actually Nicole's father was an American captain who never had acknowledged her. Now he was a prospering lawyer in the United States who had forgotten, outwardly at least, his little girl in France whom he had never seen.

Nicole's mother had met the captain when his army unit came to her town early in 1945. At the time she was a very attractive girl in her early twenties living in near poverty with her widowed mother. A few weeks after the captain had moved on to Germany—and he never bothered to write—she discovered that she was going to have a child. Her mother was a strict, puritanical woman, and when she found out what had happened, she ordered her daughter out of her house. There was no one to whom she could turn. Finally she had to go to a doctor. Here she found a sympathetic man willing to give her medical care without any thought of a fee. The baby girl was born in November 1945.

Now the young mother had no choice but to move back with her mother, and try to find some way to support her child.

When the doctor's wife found out what had happened, she determined to spare no effort to locate the father, and to impress upon him his responsibility. First she got the home address of the man who had been the representative of the American Red Cross in the town for several months, and made inquiries through him. Then she went to the local police commissioner and chief of *sureté*, and had him make inquiry to the Adjutant General's office in Washington. Finally she found that a family apparently including the captain whom she sought lived in New Jersey. Several letters from the young mother either had been lost, or had been returned undelivered. Now the doctor's wife decided to write a letter of her own, and she sent it to the captain, in care of the State of New Jersey. She explained how she happened to become interested in the case, and then went on:

You know better than we do, where and how she lives in a poor and dull house with a tyrannic mother. Your passage in her unhappy life was a beam of sunlight and joy—soon followed, when you vanished, by a very sad test of suffering. She gave birth to a little girl on the 31st of November 1945 and she was named Nicole. The baby with her darling little self is for the lonely mother a smile from heaven, but also a very heavy charge and a spring of tears. That is what she wanted to tell you several times but always failed to reach you. . . . I saw the child, she is a lovely, healthy and cute little baby of 11 months old—all dimples and smiles. Is it necessary to add anything? I don't think so. You know the whole situation, and I'm sure the gentleman you are will take good care of it according to your loyalty and to your heart.

Please will you send me an answer. I'll forward it to her—unless you prefer to write directly to her—you know better. In this envelope I enclose a few pictures. Take a look at them—and listen to your heart.

The letter came to the New Jersey State Department of Law where it was opened, and then turned over to the Division of Veterans' Services. This matter had little to do with the work of the Veterans' Loan Authority, of which the division was a part, but it seemed the state office most likely to take an interest. As a matter of fact, the deputy director took an immediate personal interest. He traced the whereabouts of the missing captain, found that he was still in Paris, living at a hotel, forwarded the letter and photographs, and notified the doctor's wife.

As soon as she learned that the captain still was in Paris, the doctor's wife took a train for the capital. There she went at once to the hotel. Finding his room number at the desk, she said that he was expecting her, and went up. He seemed to be expecting someone, but he wondered what this stranger was doing here. She quickly explained that she had come in the interest of little Nicole. It was his duty to provide a normal home, but failing that, the least he could do was to provide some financial support for the little girl and her mother. The mother was in ill health, and had almost no



means to provide for a child. He said that he had received the letter. "How much money do you want?" he asked.

"I don't want any money; I only want to see that you do something for your daughter."

"Can't you take it to her?"

"How would you know that I delivered it? No, you must provide something regularly. A little now is not enough."

"But I can't do that," he replied. The captain explained that he was engaged to be married soon when he returned to the states—to a fine girl from a highly respectable family. He never could explain this situation to his fiancée.

"There is no need to," the doctor's wife said. "You can make payments anonymously if you wish, through a bank or something."

"But I still would have to explain to my wife these monthly outlays."

"Why could not you and some of your buddies have 'adopted' a little girl which you found orphaned and homeless after a bombing raid?"

Well, he did not see how that could be worked out now.

"If you do not do something, I shall be your conscience for the rest of your life," the lady said, and she departed.

This visit did do some good, for the captain did send some money—but only once. They never heard from him again. But the doctor's wife never has forgotten, and she never has given up needling him.

Meanwhile Nicole has grown from a curly haired blonde baby to a pretty young lady of eighteen. And as she grows her questions about her family become more persistent.

When she first asked about her father, her mother explained that he had been killed in an airplane crash. Then she wanted to know where his grave was, and had to be told that he had gone down in the sea. Then she insisted on taking flowers for him to the cemetery for a memorial. Now she wants to know about her grandparents, and why she never hears from them, and if perhaps someday she may go to visit them in America. Her French grandparents both are dead now, and when it came time for her confirmation, she could send cards and pictures only to the good doctor and his wife, and to a few friends. Soon the myth must collapse. What can be done?

What can be done for all the Nicoles, for the boys and girls in towns and villages all across France left unattended by departed American soldier fathers—the forgotten children of America?

It is true, of course, that these children are not completely forgotten. French legislation on social security and family benefits does not discriminate against them, and the mothers are eligible to receive government assistance. The auxiliary of Paris Post No. 1 of the American Legion has a service to provide some help. Nevertheless in times when every point of irritation between the United States

and France is being magnified this whole problem adds a little more to general misunderstanding. Fathers as well as Americans in general prefer not to be reminded of it. And the children remain, victims of war, and victims of respectability.

Political events during the 1950's did not help to assuage the situation. The continuing, brutal war in Algeria, not finally ended until 1962, caused much misunderstanding. The French could not understand how the Americans, their erstwhile ally, could take such an equivocal, and sometimes seemingly hostile stand. The Americans, for their part, sometimes tended to regard the French as at best imperialistic, at worst coldblooded, in Algeria. The Suez Affair of 1956, too, left the French incredulous. America, they felt, pursued a policy clearly contrary to its interest. And French pride was hurt: "If only the United States would have stayed out; if only they would have let us alone, we could have had the whole thing cleared up in a short time. Why did you turn against your allies, and play into Russian hands?" After Suez, little incidents involving Americans in France were played up in the press; and it reached the point where some friendly editors feared to feature acts of American friendship for fear of antagonizing readers. And finally, there was the controversy of the legal status of American forces in France.

A common complaint of American soldiers is a dislike at finding themselves subject to the jurisdiction of French courts. It is a discontent which in some cases is based upon faulty information and lack of understanding—indicating a serious failure on the part of information and education officers. In other cases there may be some good reason for dissatisfaction. A young lieutenant in Orléans expressed his views strongly. "It isn't right that soldiers should be required to go to France, and then be deprived of their United States citizenship while there, to be subject to French law, and perhaps sentenced to rot away in a French penitentiary."

A group of truck drivers from the Bordeaux area complained that if you have an accident, the army deserts you. They spoke of a sergeant who was then in a hospital suffering from injuries received in an accident. "As soon as he gets out, the French will get him," one of them said. Another group of soldiers told of a sergeant who was home in bed when someone stole his car and wrecked it, injuring a Frenchman; the French officials traced the car to the sergeant and arrested him; he was held in jail six months, until the French court finally acquitted him.

The complaint heard most frequently among American soldiers in France during the summer of 1954 had to do with this legal status of forces—the fact that American soldiers could be tried by French courts and confined in French prisons. The excessive concern for their legal rights at that particular time probably was the

result of the widely publicized case of Keefe and Scaletti, two privates stationed at Orléans who went AWOL and, after several rounds of drinking, decided to hitchhike to Paris. They hired a taxicab to take them to the main highway, but on the way they decided to seize the cab. Leaving the cab driver bleeding and gasping beside the highway, they headed for Paris. Four days later they were apprehended by French police. They were brought to trial in the Assize Court in Orléans on October 27, 1953, charged with having stolen a vehicle, at night, on a public highway, with violence. The two Americans had the services of a French attorney and an interpreter, each appointed by the court, at the expense of the French government. A court of three judges with a jury of seven persons, selected by a drawing of names from a container in which the names of fifteen prospective jurors had been placed, heard the case.

Article 381 of the French Penal Code provides that a person guilty of theft will be punished by hard labor for life if the theft is accompanied by any four of the five following circumstances: (1) if the theft was committed at night; (2) if it was committed by two or more persons; (3) if the culprits committed the crime with the assistance of outside help, illicit entry, or if they posed falsely as public servants or as civil or military officers; (4) if the theft was committed with violence; (5) if the culprits assured themselves of a motor vehicle in order to facilitate the undertaking or to assist their getaway. Article 393 of the French Penal Code provides that a person guilty of theft committed on a public highway or on a railway train carrying passengers, mail, or baggage will be punished by life imprisonment at hard labor if the crime has been committed with the inclusion of any two of the conditions given in Article 381. There seemed to be little doubt that Keefe and Scaletti had qualified themselves under the law for life at hard labor in a French penal colony.

The attorney for the prosecution argued that American soldiers were in France to help defend this country, and by provisions of an international agreement the French had the right to try American soldiers who committed criminal offenses in France. The defense attorney pleaded that the men were not hardened criminals, but were young and irresponsible. They had only been on a drinking fling. Scaletti, and then Keefe, got up and said in substance that he regretted what they had done.

After the conclusion of the arguments the president of the court stated that in accordance with the Penal Code a finding was required on each of the following questions: Was the crime committed (1) at night? (2) by two persons? (3) on a public highway? (4) with violence? (5) with violence that left injuries?

After deliberating about an hour the three judges and seven jurors returned with their verdict, and the president of the court announced that all questions had been determined in the affirmative. The men

were given five-year prison sentences, but without hard labor, and without banishment from France. In addition, they jointly had to pay court costs amounting to 26,688 francs (seventy-six dollars).

The report of official United States observers at the trial indicated their satisfaction that Keefe and Scaletti had been represented adequately by counsel who brought out all points possible in their favor; that they had been given an opportunity to question witnesses against them, to present witnesses of their own, and to make statements on their own behalf; that the court interpreter had been very competent, and that no rights usually enjoyed under American law or guaranteed by the NATO Status of Forces Agreement had been denied.

Under the criminal jurisdiction provisions of this agreement, courts-martial of American military forces have primary jurisdiction in cases involving offenses committed by members of American military forces or civilian employees while on duty. They also have primary jurisdiction in cases where offenses have been committed by members of the American forces or civilian employees while off duty, if the offense was solely against other members of American forces or civilian employees or against American property. In cases involving offenses committed by soldiers or civilian employees while off duty the local foreign courts have primary jurisdiction. In addition American military authorities have exclusive jurisdiction in cases where the offense is punishable under the laws of the United States, but not under those of France, and French authorities have exclusive jurisdiction over American military personnel with respect to offenses punishable under French law but not punishable under the laws of the United States. Under the Status of Forces Agreement the same rules apply in all the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty.

American soldiers in France saw in these arrangements a "sell-out" of their constitutional rights. Explanations that the general rule is, that all persons, regardless of their nationality, are subject to the jurisdiction of the state where they happen to be; that American tourists and businessmen in France are all subject to French law and to the jurisdiction of French police and French courts, just as Frenchmen traveling in the United States are subject to the jurisdiction of American courts; that Americans surely would insist on claiming jurisdiction over foreigners in the United States committing crimes against the American people—all these seemed to have little effect. The obvious answer was that they were not tourists—most of them had been drafted into the army and shipped overseas without their consent. And they were here as a part of a military force on official business—here to help defend this country which now asserts criminal jurisdiction over them. To this it could be replied that as long as they remained on the military post they did not

run the risk of French jurisdiction; when they went to town of their own volition, for amusement, they put themselves in the same category as tourists, and ought not to expect special treatment as being not subject to local laws on the same basis as everyone else.

While Keefe and Scaletti certainly did receive relatively light sentences, and other American soldiers tried in French courts have too, still there was an argument on the side of those criticizing the procedure. True, Keefe and Scaletti were sentenced only to five-year terms in confinement. But it is also true that the law under which they were convicted permitted banishment to a French penal colony and hard labor for life.

What has been the actual experience of the United States in recent times? The fact is that the NATO Status of Forces Agreement represents a sharp break from the practices of the United States and its allies during the two World Wars. During World War I the traditional rule of exemption from local jurisdiction was accepted with little question. During World War II the same rules which had applied in the first World War, recognizing the exclusive jurisdiction of the sending state over its own armed forces, generally were observed. For its part the United States followed the same policy with respect to allied forces on its soil.

All this was changed under the conditions of the cold war in the 1950's. Agreements concluded with Great Britain, Portugal, Iceland, Saudi Arabia, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, and France all acknowledged some limitation on the criminal jurisdiction over American forces in those countries. This pointed to a tendency not to insist on exclusive jurisdiction in peacetime, and American negotiators had not insisted upon it in the NATO Status of Forces Agreement.

Since the NATO Status of Forces Agreement was drawn as a formal treaty, it had to go to the Senate for consent to ratification. Here some strong opposition developed against the criminal jurisdiction clauses (Article VII) of the treaty. Senator John W. Bricker of Ohio, leading the opposition, offered a reservation to provide for exclusive jurisdiction. He argued that "to approve the criminal jurisdiction provisions of this treaty would amount to penalizing the American soldier in an effort to please our NATO allies." Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois protested that if similar agreements should be made with all countries, no matter what their jurisprudence, grave danger to justice might be incurred. Senator John Butler of Maryland brought up the consideration that an American serviceman imprisoned in a foreign country would be "incarcerated away from his home, his family, and his friends."

Senator Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, presented the case for ratification,

contending that the agreement would replace the hodgepodge of bilateral agreements, insure the mobility of NATO forces in Europe, introduce an orderly system of rights, responsibilities, and procedures, and strengthen the fabric of NATO cooperation.

When the proposed Bricker reservation came to a vote, only twenty-seven votes could be found for its support, while fifty-three opposed it. After a brief continuation of the debate, the final vote on the treaty showed seventy-two in favor of ratification to fifteen against.

But the overwhelming Senate vote could not allay the doubts which had been expressed about the Status of Forces Agreement. Surely the administration could have presented a stronger case for the treaty. It may have been a mistake for the State Department and administration spokesmen to build their case so much on legal grounds, for the opposition could build a legal case, and cite historical precedents, which was perhaps stronger. The crux of the whole matter was the fact that European governments insisted on this measure of jurisdiction as a condition to their consent for foreign troops to be stationed in their territory. This was not primarily a legal question, but a diplomatic one in the first instance.

In modern warfare, soldiers are quartered in many villages, often in houses of inhabitants, and not in separate camps and reservations. Under conditions of modern war no real distinction can be made between "on duty" and "off duty" status. In these days of long-range bombing, paratroops, and guerrilla raids, a soldier may be called at any time to spring into action. This makes difficult the application of traditional rules.<sup>1</sup>

More cogent reasons remained for ratification of the Status of Forces Agreement. The first part of the traditional rule should be kept in mind—that the foreign troops must be in the country with the *consent* of the local government. Certainly if the consent of a government is necessary, that government may attach conditions to its consent. It had to be remembered that American troops were not in France, for instance, primarily to defend France. They were there as a part of a joint effort in which their major concern was the security of the United States. If Russian consolidation of central and western Europe with the Communist empire would pose a real threat to the security of the United States, then the American government was going to be anxious to do whatever it could—including making some concessions to allies—to build and maintain the strength in Europe necessary to prevent the development of that threat.

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<sup>1</sup> See Archibald King, "Jurisdiction over Friendly Foreign Armed Forces," *American Journal of International Law*, XXXVI (Oct. 1942), 539-67, and the same author, "Further Developments Concerning Jurisdiction over Friendly Foreign Armed Forces," *American Journal of International Law*, XL (April 1946), 257-79.

Now the Americans were in France in time of peace, and their stay was of indefinite duration—likely to be a long one. A great many servicemen had their families with them, and they lived in family dwellings as a part of the local community rather than on isolated military reservations. Moreover it was provided in the Status of Forces Agreement itself that in the event of hostilities, certain sections, including those relating to criminal jurisdiction, should be reviewed immediately by the parties concerned, who might agree to any modifications which they considered desirable in applying the agreement between themselves. By giving sixty days' notice after the commencement of hostilities, any party to the agreement can suspend the application of any of the provisions so far as it is concerned.

The French are very sensitive to any appearance that their sovereignty is being violated. Indeed any such appearance is likely to become at once grist for the Communist propaganda mill. Should Communists thus succeed in driving a wedge into the North Atlantic Treaty system, then the result surely would be far worse than any moderate concessions which might be granted in the matter of jurisdiction over troops.

Furthermore American soldiers in France certainly are no worse off in their legal position than the thousands of American tourists who visit France each year. To a young American of twenty, setting out for a bicycle tour of France, the thought of criminal jurisdiction hardly occurs. It is rare indeed to hear of anyone's turning down the opportunity to visit Europe on the ground that he is reluctant to place himself under the legal jurisdiction of foreign police officers and courts.

As a matter of fact the Status of Forces Agreement does carry some very important provisions for the protection of the legal rights of the kind to which American soldiers have been accustomed—guarantees which the ordinary American citizen in France or other foreign countries does not enjoy as a matter of specific agreement. And while the criminal jurisdiction provisions of the NATO Status of Forces Agreement received the greatest attention, and in fact were the sole object of attack on the part of those opposed to ratification, the agreement does cover many other important points of legal rights and responsibilities of visiting military forces in the countries of NATO.

Clearly, then, the Status of Forces Agreement has filled a real need for the definition of legal rights and responsibilities in the special circumstances of the 1960's which find American troops present in friendly, sovereign states on a long-term basis.

France remains a favorite country of American tourists and as American soldiers stationed there are able to find better housing for themselves and their families, as they come to understand the

French people and their way of doing things, as they have a chance to become acquainted with the country in peacetime, as they come to see in France the things which each year attract thousands of American tourists, really amicable relations between American soldiers and Frenchmen can prevail again.



PART FOUR

# NANCY IN WAR AND PEACE



# 10

## Nancy is Free!

Nancy, traditional capital of Lorraine and major city of eastern France, consistently has been coveted both as a military and as a political prize by antagonists who have battled around it in one war after another. Yet it has had the good fortune to escape the devastation which has come to many of its sister cities in two world wars. Its scars of war are more emotional than physical. Today it shares in the economic recovery which has come to France, but it continues to live under the influence of past wars and fears of new ones.

Though Nancy itself was not formally annexed by the Germans after their 1940 victory, it closely associated itself with, and was regarded as the political leader of, the region to the east which Hitler did claim for the Reich. By its very size and location Nancy was bound to be a center for German occupation forces, and, conversely, for underground activities aimed against those occupation forces. With a population of more than 120,000, and 50,000 to 60,000 more in the suburbs, Nancy is an important communications point two hundred miles east of Paris and sixty miles southwest of the German border. It is an important railway center; and the Rhine-Marne Canal, as well as major highways radiating toward Metz, Toul-Paris, Épinal-Belfort, Strasbourg, and Sarreguemines provide other commercial arteries. Location near the rich Lorraine iron-ore deposits assures the city an important position in industry. Aside from the mining in the vicinity, Nancy is important for the manufacture of glass, shoes, furniture, casks, tobacco. It is proud of its university and its artisans. Now a city of fine buildings and imposing churches, it traces its colorful history back to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. And it was the symbol of these people—the cross of Lorraine—that became the symbol of the Free French in World War II. (The origin of their double-barred cross can be traced back

to the Crusades and the conquest of Jerusalem by Godefroy de Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine). The "Marche Lorraine" practically became a second national anthem for the French Resistance in World War II.

Immediately the visitor finds suggestions of the intimate association Nancy has had with war in the names of the streets. If one comes in by the Paris-Toul highway, National Route 4, he finds himself going down Avenue de la Libération. At Place Godefroy de Bouillon, this becomes Rue de l'Armée Patton. In Maxéville, the northern suburb, one might pass Place de 15 Septembre (the date of liberation in 1944) or approach Nancy by Avenue du General Patton. Route 74, the highway from Dijon and Neufchâteau comes in on Avenue du Général Leclerc. Other street names bear witness to earlier martial associations: Rue Gambetta, Avenue du XX Corps, Avenue Foch, Rue du Maréchal Exelmans, Rue du Maréchal Gerard, Rue du Maréchal Oudinot, Boulevard Joffre, Place du Colonel Driant, Place du Général Castelnau, and at least fifteen other names of generals and colonels. At the same time, some twenty-five streets carry the names of various saints. Rue de la Paix, the street of peace, however, is confined to three or four blocks through the gardens at the southwest corner of the city—just beyond the military garrisons.

French army units garrisoned in the casernes of Nancy maintain a rich military tradition. Here is the headquarters for the 2d Infantry Division, successor to the 2d Moroccan Infantry Division which was formed in May 1943 by bringing together units from Taza, Oujda, Meknes and Fez in North Africa. It fought with distinction in World War II through Italy, in the Alps, in Alsace, and across Germany to Austria. Old regiments now at Nancy include the 26th Infantry and the 8th Artillery. Inscribed on their flags are the names of such campaigns as these: Fleurus (1794), Austerlitz (1805), Friedland (1807), Constantine (1837), Béni-Méred (1842), Sebastopol (1854-55), Solferino (1859), Lorraine (1914), Verdun (1916), Aisne (1917-18), Soissonnais (1918).

Locally an allusion to the "Battle of Nancy" is likely to refer to the famous siege of 1477 which ended in the death of Charles the Bold and the defeat of his Burgundians at the hands of René II, Duke of Lorraine. But Nancy has been a frequent victim of invasion in more recent times. Early in the Franco-Prussian War, the army of Crown Prince William of Prussia marched into Nancy (August 12, 1870), and German troops remained in occupation until August 1, 1873—a month before France paid the final installment on the war indemnity which the new German Empire had levied. In those years Nancy faced grave problems of social adjustment, not only from conditions growing directly out of the warfare and the long

period of hostile occupation, but as well from those created by the influx of large numbers of families who moved from the outlying sections of Lorraine and Alsace when those provinces were annexed to the German Reich. This had brought the frontier, along the Seille River, to within about twelve miles of Nancy.

In 1914 the stout defense of General Noël de Castelnau and his French Second Army spared Nancy another German occupation. After preliminary French offensives through the "lost province" of Lorraine had been hurled back, Castelnau braced himself for the German counterattack which was gaining momentum as it drove toward Nancy. For his supreme defensive effort the French commander chose the ring of dominating hills in front of the city—Plateau de Malzéville, Butte Ste. Genéviève, Mont St. Jean, Plateau d'Amance, Forêt de Champenoux, Belchamps, Pain de Sucre—known as the Grand Couronné. After a flanking movement to the south failed, the Germans resorted to direct frontal attack. For two weeks the battle of the Grand Corona raged and the fate of Nancy hung in the balance. At last on September 11 General Castelnau was able to launch an attack of his own. The Germans fell back to the Seille River where they remained for four years in a "stabilized" situation. Its defiant resistance in those times won for Nancy the Legion of Honor and the Croix de Guerre and spared it capitulation; but it did not prevent some war damage. Aerial bombardment and the shells of "Big Bertha" took five hundred civilian casualties and caused considerable property damage during those long, tense years of war.

Thousands of Americans came into intimate contact with Nancy in 1917 and 1918, for it was in this "quiet" sector that troops of the AEF went into the trenches, and Nancy became a center of American military activity as General Pershing organized his forces for his first major victory—Saint-Mihiel—and for the great Meuse-Argonne offensive which immediately followed. Captain Harry Truman and his Battery D, 129th Field Artillery (35th Division) were standing in the dark streets of Nancy when, at one A.M. on September 12, 1918, the front to the north broke out in flame when the greatest mass of artillery ever seen up to that time began its preparatory fires for the Saint-Mihiel attack. The future President's battery had moved up in successive night marches of twelve, eighteen, twenty-two, and twenty-five miles. Columns of men, animals, and vehicles had chocked the roads, and the nights had been hours of standing, starting, halting.

Exactly twenty-six years later, in September 1944, the 35th Division again was approaching Nancy. This time, as a part of General George S. Patton Jr.'s Third Army, the division was fighting its way forward to relieve Lorraine from another four-year period of German occupation.

In their withdrawal across France before the advancing Third Army, some German SS units paused long enough at three villages of Meuse, near Bar-le-Duc (about fifty miles west of Nancy) to reenact on a lesser scale the vicious crime of Oradour-sur-Glane. Once more the Nazis inhumanly laid waste innocent villages and massacred scores of people.

Hearing that the Americans were approaching Troyes, and soon should be at Vitry-la-Ville, people of the village of Robert-Espagne began to prepare flags to welcome the liberators. Retreating German columns streamed through the town. Then on the morning of August 29, men leaving their homes here to bicycle or walk to their jobs in neighboring foundries, paper mills, or fields, found groups of German soldiers blocking each exit of the village and forbidding anyone to leave. Shortly after noon some German motorcyclists sped into the center of the town and set off a violent explosion. Fifty men of the village, ranging in age from seventeen to sixty, were assembled and told to sit and wait in front of the railway station. Then details of Germans armed with incendiary grenades moved through the town systematically setting fire to houses, shops, schools, and other buildings. Early in the evening some of the women were able to bring some food to their husbands, sons, and fathers. For the men, it was their last supper. They were marched to the railroad track, and all fifty were shot. The women and children, and some men who had escaped through the fields, took refuge in the country. That night only the church still was standing amidst the ruins of Robert-Espagne and the bodies of the fifty men who had been massacred there.

That same day the Germans also burned the neighboring village of Beurey-sur-Saulx, where they shot six men, and about the same time they burned Couvonges, and murdered twenty-six men there.

Again it is difficult to understand the reasons for these actions. These were not executions of proved members of Resistance groups—there had been no trial or hearing of any kind. The Germans did claim that their troops were fired upon from the villages. This is universally and emphatically denied by the French survivors. There was too great a similarity in the patterns followed in the three villages to permit serious doubt that the whole thing was premeditated. What seems likely is that these massacres were done to intimidate members of the FFI who had been operating out of the Forêt de Trois Fontaines, which was not far away. But it also is likely that nothing could have been calculated to make those underground groups more determined than ever to continue their fight.

Delayed by shortages of gasoline, as supply priorities were shifted to the north, the Third Army's drive to the east at last was able to regain something of its momentum in September. Those were days

of nervous, anxious waiting inside Nancy. Some unknown citizen of Nancy jotted down his impressions of those days in these words:

The people of Nancy and their neighbors have been put to a hard trial. Perhaps never, during their whole lives, have they realized as they do now, the significance of these words: to wait.

Not only for heart and mind, supported by hope, and always anticipating a little the events; but also for news, since four years featured by a life agitated from thousands of rumors, echoes, hopes, deceptions, very often from painful events, want of food—aside from a few fortune-privileged people or some very shrewd cheats.

And there were also the partings: prisoners, workmen sent into Germany, the cruel griefs of those who die in exile, maybe near no one, but far from those whom they wanted to see, martyrs to the national cause, of whom we never will dismiss our thoughts in dismay through all the savage cruelty exerted by German agents.

At last we were near escape from this nightmare.

News followed news, each better than the other. Paris was liberated. The first part of the American 3rd Army, led by its famous General Patton, was speeding toward us like a glove's finger. Chalons-sur-Marne was already taken, Reims was falling, Vitry-le-Francois was liberated, and, on the wings of fancy, many of our citizens were speaking with certainty of Bar-le-Duc, Fougères, and even—that was curious and even a little astonishing—of Lunéville.

But it's true that many people, without consulting either the map or the reasoning, yield themselves to the witchery of pictures expected and caressed by fancy the more easily as all this ends by a kind of little dizzy attitude—like a good wine stimulus does for a host ready to sit joyfully at the most beautiful feast of his life.

Then the till-now fine weather, increased by a tropical heat, began to darken. Rain is now falling, pressed, thick, heavy, grey, as for drowning more easily the waiting's excessive exitation, which, at this time, has no bounds.

One particularly heavy afternoon, under a pitiless sunshine, all the German services, officers, shoulder-knots (flunkies, valets, menials), scum collected in Nancy for 4 years, wavered in an extravagance of war, broke heavily upon every road leading to the Reich with thousands of queer vehicles which had been stolen, borrowed, taken away from the owners, and was like the smoke of a half-dried grass fire which dislodges thousands of insects that have earthed themselves in a thicket.

On the following days the whole resources of a retreating army unfurled. Heavy and powerful trucks doubled by weighty cars. One of these vehicles was crushed against a wall at the Avenue Boufflers' declivity. Never would its occupants see again the "Great Reich" as they said. This wild column was covered with boughs, nests, the most complicated and also the most improvised things for hiding themselves before the look-out man bent from his plane above this bewildered flight. An old Lorraine woman of the surrounding country found the right words. She found that it was like a procession decorated for Corpus Christi Day, but that this people were thinking more about saving themselves than about God.

Feverishly this night, the Nanceien waited.

Would they come, the prodigious drivers from beyond the seas, the drivers of rapid tanks, in a word, those who ought to charge in a folly their palpitating pango.

No, they did not come.

Better informed people knew that the three columns of the 3rd Army, which started respectively from Rivigny, Saint-Dizier, and the country of Joinville, stopped in their rush.

The first, because she met a strong German withdrawal [action] propped against the Argonne, and advantaged by the Aisne's valley pass. Verdun, Saint-Mihiel had been first overflowed, and again occupied by Germans, and at last taken again after heavy battles.

During this time the 2nd column arrived on the level of Flirey was slackening his push, doubtless for preventing a German sally between Metz and Nancy. And of the Joinville's column, no news. Time was not fire again, with light autumn's wind, yellow leaves and first melancholic impressions which belong to autumn, in simile something tired, of a nature soon going, like a glory of the German Army, into the grave.

Nancy was quiet again, very quiet, too quiet for the impatient Nanceien.

As the occupier took away, with violent proceedings, all the bicycles, the town was soon only a pedestrian city. No car was circulating, but sometimes here or there a lonely German tank escorted and guarded by soldiers, with rifles in hand.

News was murmured in the streets: soon men would not go out of their homes, every circulation would cease, phone lines would be cut.

Incidents started in different places because of a tardy arrest by the Gestapo, or of resistance of a boy, more courageous than the others, who did not want to give his bicycle, fought with his aggressor.

During the night, a lonely plane had been prowling above the city and dropped bombs, one on the Leopold Avenue, the others on the old ducal district. Why did he do it?

Hours followed hours, extraordinary news was always coming from north of France, Belgium, Holland. Lost Germany seemed to turn around on the same place. But always around and before Nancy, good news was stopping as if it were wanting for breath, or for wings in the purpose of the last soaring.

On Tuesday, the 5th, in the morning, big guns shot from daylight till about noon. The radio, whose reporters, like the Nanceien, took their wish as reality, did announce liberation of the Lorraine capital, Stanislas' city.

This day, Radio-National informed that the Germans raised Pont-à-Mousson and that American tanks were going down the side-hills along the Moselle, for cutting off all retreat to crowded German columns which directed themselves toward the safety bridge.

A big pincers was closing on Nancy—the 80th Division north of the big bend of the Moselle, and the 35th south of it, and a combat command of the 4th Armored Division cooperating with each. Attempts of the 134th Infantry to get across the Moselle River near Flavigny, just eight miles south of Nancy, resulted in the most severe fighting that that regiment had seen since Mortain. Discovering the highway bridge at Flavigny intact, the 2nd Battalion seized it on the night of September 10, and infantrymen hurried across to build up a bridgehead while the 3rd Battalion marched to the area and made ready to cross as soon as the 2nd had cleared. Then, as success appeared to be imminent, the Germans counterattacked violently. Con-



tinuous flares, and an unending roar of artillery and mortar shells marked the bridge site all night. About 1:30 A.M. the central span of the bridge was blown out—and the companies who already had crossed were isolated without the means either for reinforcement or escape. Those who could swam back across the river and the canal which parallels it. The others were killed or taken prisoner. The bridgehead, and the short route to Nancy, were lost.

The next day the strength of the 2nd Battalion (860 officers and men at full strength) was reported at 295. Early in the morning after that weird night struggle at the Flavigny bridge, the other two infantry regiments of the 35th Division, the 137th and the 320th, were able to make crossings of the Moselle several miles to the south. Then on September 14, while attacks continued far to the north and to the south, the 134th Infantry moved to Toul to join the 319th Infantry of the 80th Division in a special task force under General Sebree for a direct attack on Nancy from the west. Here the 134th Infantry had the advantage of crossing the Moselle at a place, at the western extremity of the big bend, which already had been taken by the 80th Division.

Moving out from Gondreville at six A.M. on September 15, with the 319th Infantry in the lead, the task force moved rapidly toward Nancy, nine miles away. German opposition quickly dissolved, and by 8:20, the leading companies were marching down the highway in route column, with only patrols moving through the wooded areas of Forêt de Haye on either side to protect the flanks. Finally infantrymen mounted tanks for the final dash to the low ridge overlooking Nancy. Its mission accomplished when this high ground west of Nancy was occupied, Task Force Sebree was dissolved, and while the 319th Infantry moved back to join the 80th Division to the north, the 134th Infantry moved into the city.

That Nancy could be liberated without heavy aerial or artillery bombardment was the result of the maneuvers of the 35th and 80th divisions and of the close cooperation of the French Information Service and the FFI with the American forces. A journal of the Resistance records what was happening inside the city while the men of the 134th Infantry Regiment and their American comrades were approaching:

*Thursday, 31 August 1944*

At 1800 hours, prisoners held by the German garrison at Charles III Prison are liberated.

*Friday, 1 September 1944*

Attempt to seize the Reichsbahn weapons depot, Place Saint Jean, by the FFI and the police.

700 or 800 rifles, 28 machine-guns, numerous grenades and an important munitions dump would have made it possible to arm some units.

One German was killed.

*Sunday, 3 September 1944*

The German command decides to send 54 trains from Lunéville to Jarville.

The Resistance asks for the bombardment of the freight station of Blainville and redoubles sabotage incidents.

German armor takes up positions in the district around Nancy and particularly in the Forest of Haye.

*Tuesday, 5 September 1944*

From the 4th to the 9th of September, the Liberation Committee and FFI Staff are in constant session, watching the development of the situation, which seems to be becoming serious for Nancy.

*Sunday, 10 September 1944*

During the night, the telephone line between Frouard and Champigneulle is sabotaged, at the place known as la Rochotte.

At the request of the FFI command, the German troop concentration in the Forest of Haye is bombarded for the first time.

*Monday, 11 September 1944*

Overhead and underground telephone lines to Malzéville, Saint-Max and Essey-lès-Nancy are sabotaged.

*Tuesday, 12 September 1944*

From one o'clock to three o'clock in the morning, a German column of 2000 men passes along the rue de Metz and the rue de Strasbourg.

On the Avenue de Boufflers and in the rue de Toul, the Wehrmacht takes precautionary measures against a possible FFI attack. Artillery pieces are emplaced to fire on the city.

As a result of details supplied by the underground intelligence agencies, the Resistance secures a new and violent bombardment of the Forest of Haye.

Underground cables along national highway 57 are sabotaged near Houdemont and the telephone line between Maxéville and Saint Jacques farms cut.

*Wednesday, 13 September 1944*

As a result of the bombardment of the Forest of Haye, the Germans withdraw part of their troops.

Reconnaissance of detonating devices of mines placed in position for destroying permanent structures.

*Thursday, 14 September 1944*

Three FFI's are sent on a reconnaissance mission toward the American lines.

They establish contact, inform the American Staff of the sector about the types and locations of mines.

This liaison will spare Nancy the bombardment planned for the following morning.

Three American columns, guided by these FFI will take over the city.

Thanks to the intervention of PTT officials, little destruction takes place at the telephone exchange.

Patrols by heavily armed SS Troops.

The Germans finish the demolitions decided on by their Staff (A plan for the Eastern Region is to be found after the Liberation).

Burning of the Grands Moulins by a heavily armed group. The Germans forbid access to the spot by rescue squads.

The survivors of the bombardment of the Forest of Haye fall back to Frouard and Flavigny.

Detached groups take prisoners.

1800 hours—Meeting of the FFI staff and of the President of CDL—Review of the situation—Sensitive points will be occupied during the night. Night patrols—Telegram to London from Colonel Grandval asking for the support of American troops for the following morning.

Major Lamolle-Larivier gives the order for setting military action in motion on the 15th at 6 o'clock in the morning.

Acts of insurrection are authorized and posters are put up.

*Friday, 15 September 1944*

During the night: the Palais du Gouvernement is occupied and the Préfecture, City Hall, and telephone exchange kept under surveillance.

6 o'clock: Action begun according to plan: Patrols cover the city. Mopping-up of premises by the enemy or his collaborators. Arrest of suspects.

9 o'clock: Conflicting reports. The crowds are nervous.

9:30 o'clock: Colonel Grandval and Major Pierret-Gérard visit the Regional Prefect Jean-Faure.

10:15 o'clock: At the CP of the FTPF, on Place des Dames, Mr. Chailley-Bert, Mr. Dieudonné, Chief de Cabinet of the Police Intendant, Major Lamolle-Lariviere, Chief of the FFI, Majors Herr-Nemours and Stenger-Richard of the FTPF receive General Sebree and a Colonel whom a group of FTPF have gone and brought from Fonds-de-Toul.

10:45 o'clock: Mr. Peters, President of the Liberation Committee, and Major Pierret-Gérard, Chief of the insurrectionists, notify Mr. Schmitt that he is no longer Mayor of Nancy. Installation of Mr. Prouvé as new Mayor of Nancy.

11:10 o'clock: Arrival of the first American tanks.

11:30 o'clock: Installation of Mr. Chailley-Bert, Commissaire de la République and of Mr. Blache, Prefect of Meurthe-et-Moselle by the Liberation Committee in presence of Colonel Grandval, Major Pierret-Gérard, Major Lamolle-Lariviere and Mr. Pierron. Mr. Peeters, President of the Liberation Committee, makes a speech. Upon his installation, the Commissaire de la République issues a proclamation to the Lorraine population.

### NANCY IS FREE

but the battle is continuing at the gates of the city, where Frenchmen and Americans are uniting their efforts.

That continuing battle—largely a matter of ferreting out snipers and small groups—fell principally to the 1st Battalion which was entering the city on Rue de Toul (now Avenue de la Libération). The incoming soldiers were nearly overwhelmed by the tumultuous reception which they received. Cheering crowds, bottles of wine, screaming women, and bouquets turned their thoughts away from the danger; it seemed quite obvious that all the Germans had withdrawn. As they approached the bridge that passes over the railroad tracks near Place Thiers, an old bearded gentleman came running up to them and began shouting rapid phrases of French and waving his hands wildly. What he was saying was that Germans were in the buildings across the way and that they should take cover. But

French might as well have been Greek for these soldiers. They thought the old man was just happy to be liberated, and they waved back to him, pounded him on the back, and shouted "Ain't it great, Grandpa? Vive la France!"

At this point a chic blonde, speaking clear English, came up to give the warning in terms which could be understood. It was too late for one man who was hit by machine-pistol bullets, but that burst was the signal for everyone to disperse. Soldiers began coming out of the following trucks like ants out of a struck hill. Then the lady not only pointed out where the Germans were, but, while some soldiers opened fire on the building to fix the enemy in his place, she led a patrol by a covered route to a back entrance. The men went in and quickly returned with their prisoners.

Still wild, happy throngs lined the streets, and cheering crowds filled the great open square—Place Stanislas—to acclaim the liberators. Women rushed to the streets with babies, holding their children's hands out that they might touch an American soldier! It was as though this should have been the ending of a dramatic novel in which the hero and heroine "live happily ever after."

But the people must have known that this was not so. Liberation could not automatically bring prosperous towns, for many days of bitter war for France and her allies remained ahead; and even then a return to anything like pre-war conditions could be achieved only with the greatest difficulty. Their city would continue to be filled with foreign soldiers; but the people would consider themselves free, for to them, these soldiers represented the kind of liberty which they associated with the tradition of the French Republic.

The leaders of liberated Nancy—Chailley-Bert, Dieudonné Peeters, Prouvé, Blache, Grandval, Herr-Nemours, Stenger-Richard, Pierret-Gérard, Lamolle-Lariviere, and the others—were not unaware of the practical difficulties which they faced in making necessities of food and clothing available to the population. On the day of liberation M. P. Chailley Bert, Commissioner of the Republic issued a directive on revictualing the population. He explained that rationing would have to be maintained strictly, and he called upon the population for discipline in enforcing the rules. All acts of pillage would be punished immediately. In other statements the commissioner declared all vehicles, equipment, merchandise left by the German army to be national property, and to be reported to the police. In addition he called upon merchants and manufacturers to cooperate in making goods available and in making available all possible means of transport; he warned that black-market operations would be punished severely by court martial.

Problems of rebuilding the economy—of finding jobs and producing food, clothing and shelter for the populace—were to persist for a decade.

# 11

## Resistance

The prominence which European women played in the Resistance movements—the blows they took, the courage they exhibited, the sacrifices they made—were almost incomprehensible to American soldiers who had generally thought that women's contributions to national defense should not go beyond USO shows, the WAC's, or industrial work. The woman who led the American patrol to the German snipers is Sylviane Louyot; she is the wife of a prominent surgeon and the mother of seven children. Still attractive and youthful in appearance, she looks more the sister than the mother of her children. She always took an interest in helping the various American headquarters which were located in Nancy after the liberation.

Back in 1927 young Sylviane met an American lawyer in Paris, Frank Murphy, at the time touring Europe with his brother, George. There the future Supreme Court justice began a friendship which continued for the rest of his life. It is possible that the betrothal of the pretty young Parisienne to a young Paris medical student meant a defeat for the American lawyer. Sylviane became Mme. Jean Louyot, wife of a physician who won an outstanding reputation as a gynecologist and surgeon. Frank Murphy became Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, but he never married.

When the Germans moved across the Low Countries toward France in the spring of 1940, and her husband was serving with his army unit, Mme. Louyot went with her children back to the Atlantic coast in order to get out of the path of invasion. There she found work as a clerk in a British headquarters. Watching the German onslaught move into France in May, Mme. Louyot despaired of turning the tide. Looking everywhere for some hope, her thoughts turned to the United States, and to her old friend, Frank Murphy, now a justice in the Supreme Court. She sat down and poured her

heart into a twelve-page letter to him. "We are going to lose the war if the United States does not help," she wrote, "and I hope they will not wait as long as they did the last time."

On June 12, four days before Pétain asked for an armistice, Justice Murphy took a sheet of his Supreme Court stationery and penned this reply:

My dear Sylviane:

Your dear letter came to me and has been read through more than once.

This message is sent to you in the hopes that the knowledge that you have the prayers of an old friend during these dark hours will in some small measure hearten and freshen you.

He put a three-cent stamp on the envelope, and mailed it to the address in Nantes which Mme. Louyot had given. But by the time it got there, she had moved to Perros-Guirec on the northern coast of Brittany. In spite of the fact that the Germans now occupied the whole coastal area, and the letter carried enough postage only for domestic mail, it was forwarded to her, and she obtained it after paying two francs for postage due.

In another letter written in November 1945, referring to her mention of the honors which had come to him as mayor of Detroit, governor of Michigan, governor-general of the Philippines, and Supreme Court justice, Murphy wrote: "I have been unworthy of these honors. I know too well how much of an accident they all were. But to help the poor, to free a nation and fight corruption has been a glorious task."

When Mme. Louyot's sixth child, Muriel, was born in 1946, Justice Murphy was godfather by proxy, and as long as he lived he always remembered to send her a gift on her birthday. In the spring of 1947 Mme. Louyot was able to visit Justice Murphy in Washington, where she was entertained royally.

She continues to be thoroughly, though not blindly, pro-American. In the waiting room of her husband's office she keeps only American magazines. As she puts it, she maintains a pro-French attitude toward her American friends, and a pro-American attitude toward her French friends, and she does not hesitate to defend her country and her city against slurs by outsiders.

Mme. Louyot worked as a member of the Resistance upon her return to Nancy after the 1940 armistice. Her main contribution was in using her big house to hide escaped French prisoners who were on their way to Free France. Here the French railroad was truly functioning as an "underground railroad." Trains were carrying escaped prisoners, usually hidden in the tender, toward the unoccupied areas. However, it was possible to hide only a few men at a time this way, and the movement of any sizable number thus would have to be spread over several days. It was during this period of

waiting that it was necessary for the escaped prisoners to find refuge among members of the Underground. A man employed at the railroad organized these procedures, and he would send the prisoners to particular addresses to hide out for so many days until transportation would be available. Sometimes German agents would come disguised as French prisoners in order to try to find out who was handling this scheme and how it worked. But the French leader at the station always sent a letter with each prisoner for identification. Actually the letter meant nothing, but cooperating members knew the man's signature, and this would verify the prisoner. Recognizing that the Germans might apprehend the man at the station and force him to write a letter for one of their stooges, the organization arranged another identifying mark for the letters. If a letter had a small, obscure dot, or period, in the upper right-hand corner, it was taken as authentic. But should the period be missing, then it would be known that the letter had been written under duress. In that case the recipient would disclaim any knowledge of what the prisoner was talking about, and would refuse to hide him.

One of Mme. Louyot's prized possessions is a crude compass which an escaped prisoner gave her for a souvenir. The prisoner had made the compass from a German matchbox, a clothing snap, a straightpin, and a razor blade. With this to guide him he escaped from a German prison camp, and then sleeping by day and walking by night, he went west, west, west, until, after walking some 225 miles he reached France and the assistance of the Underground.

Mme. Louyot has many reminders of the occupation among her souvenirs: a postal-card form on which one wrote to a prisoner of war in Germany simply by crossing out the supplied words which did not apply, and filling in blanks with one or two in between—a return letter form for close relatives of prisoners of war—a form for requesting supplementary food rations for large families.

On one occasion, Mme. Louyot recalls, Gestapo agents followed her home with a police dog at a time when she did in fact have an escaped prisoner in her house. Overtaking her, the dog leaped up and knocked her to the pavement. She was so frightened that the sight of a German shepherd still makes her shudder. When the men came up they made it clear that they were going to search the house. At the door she rang the bell with a pre-arranged danger signal. This gave the maid and the children a few precious minutes to clear the way on the second floor—where the main living quarters were located—while she stalled with the German agents. The prisoner hurried to a dark recess of the attic. Then Mme. Louyot led the Gestapo men all through the basement and the first floor, insisting at each turn that they move furniture, explore thoroughly each side room and corner to be absolutely sure that no one was there. By

the time they had followed that procedure over the whole house they were so exhausted that they neglected the attic.

One evening Mme. Louyot answered a knock at the door to find three German soldiers waiting. They entered and immediately began speaking to her in English. Though of course she understood English perfectly, she dared not admit it, for that surely would create suspicion of dealings with the British or the Americans. She pretended not to understand anything the soldiers said. Then they spoke in German. Again she indicated not understanding. At last one spoke in French. He told her that she was to report to the Gestapo headquarters at eight o'clock the next morning.

"What if I do not come?" she asked.

"You have children," the soldier answered, "and you cannot go far with them. You will be there."

"I knew you would do that," she said coolly. "I just wanted to hear you say it."

She spent all night preparing for whatever she had to face the next day—burning papers, notifying her Underground contact to send no more prisoners, instructing the maid and the children what to do if she failed to return. Next morning she bathed, put on her best pre-war clothing and perfume, and went out to meet her fate. She had no idea how much the Gestapo knew, but she was prepared for the worst; she fully expected that by the day's end she would be on the way to a concentration camp, or even to execution.

When she arrived the Gestapo agents kept her waiting for a while, and then took her in for questioning. As on the evening before, they began in English and insisted that she understood. Again her reaction was simply, "*Je ne comprends pas.*" Then for several minutes the agents turned from her and spoke to each other in English.

"What shall we do with her?" they said. "Should we send her directly to a concentration camp? What should we do with her children?"

Obviously they were trying to get a reaction from her that would betray her comprehension of English. Fighting increasing nervousness, she managed to hold her blank expression. She told them that if they had any questions to ask her they would address her in her own language—the only language she understood.

"But you did work for the English, didn't you?" they demanded.

"Yes, before our country was invaded when I was a refugee at Bordeaux and my husband was at the battlefront, our bank accounts were frozen and I had to work to feed my children. I worked as a clerk copying papers for the English."

"And yet you do not understand English?"

"No; you do not have to understand a language to copy it. I could copy Chinese."



They asked if she knew a certain woman. Actually Mme. Louyot knew that that woman was a member of another Underground organization, but she answered, "No." They brought out a letter and asked if she had written it. Fortunately she had not written the letter, and she was able to disprove the charge with a sample of her own handwriting. They asked if she was a member of a certain Underground organization. Actually she belonged to a different group, but her answer still would have been no in any case. Finally, after keeping her there from eight A.M. until two P.M., they let her go home unmolested.

At the end of the war, in November 1945, Mme. Louyot, armed with a *carte blanche* from the Ministry of Prisoners of War, Deportees, and Refugees, went to Germany on a special mission to search for French deportees.

Mme. Louyot, the Frenchmen who went out to meet the Americans to save their city from bombardment, and scores of their comrades represented underground organizations which had been working in Nancy almost from the beginning of the German occupation in 1940.

It had made a deep impression on the people of Lorraine who were not willing to accept defeat when General Charles de Gaulle had broadcast his appeal from London on June 18, 1940: "To all France: France has lost a battle, but France has not lost the war. I urge all Frenchmen, wherever they may be, to join me in action, in sacrifice, in hope. Our country is in mortal danger. Let us fight to save it."

Hopeful people began to search each other out and began to hold meetings to form the first links of what was to become the Resistance. There was clandestine passing of the line between "occupied" and "unoccupied" France; there was receipt and distribution of weapons; there was help for escaping prisoners. Local Underground newspapers began to spring up: *Lorraine*, *La Voix de L'Est*, *Libération*, *Chardon Lorrain*. The Resistance was organized and began to grow; some of its first efforts were for refugees from the forced labor draft and their families. In spite of arrests, shootings, mass deportations, the organization continued to grow. Each time its leaders were apprehended and arrested, it reorganized quickly and resumed its activities.

In April 1943 the Secret Army of Lorraine was formed. New sites were designated for parachute operations, and acts of sabotage were planned in cooperation with national organizations. In August of that year came the "dislocation" of the first *Maquis* when the principal leaders were arrested or forced to flee. But in November the first departmental committee of liberation was formed for Meurthe-et-Moselle. The following January (1944) the Resistance movement

of eight departments was formed into Region C under the command of Colonel Gilbert Grandval in Nancy. Then the departmental committee of liberation was reorganized along lines established by the national committee, and the military and civilian movements—the FFI and the FTPF—came under the control of the national headquarters in accordance with directives from the military representatives in London. Activities continued to mount in the face of serious difficulties. In February, for example, an attack on the electricity substation of the Nancy railroad terminal resulted in the arrest of thirty-four men—eleven were shot and twenty-three deported. Again in April the Gestapo was able to learn the identity of several of the members of the staff of the Lorraine Resistance movement. Its numerous arrests included the military chief of the Nancy sector. In May the Gestapo picked up the leader of the “Liberation” movement. But that same month the government of the Free French, in Algiers, appointed as Commissioner of the Republic and as prefects the men whom the departmental committee had nominated.

The coming of the invasion in June had brought new calls for action. After a message from the BBC, the GREEN plan went into effect for the spread of sabotage along railways, canals, and other communication lines, and for general guerrilla warfare. New mass arrests followed, and in July the committee of liberation, reduced to a fraction of its former membership, set about recruiting new followers. The second in command of the Nancy region was arrested, but the Resistance continued to broaden its activities. By August the rapid drive of the American columns across France was sending Germans streaming through the city. Resistance organizations set up permanent headquarters and began to perfect plans for the liberation. Then special measures had to be taken to prevent a premature and disastrous outbreak. But discipline held, and Underground agents were on hand to lead the Americans into the city.

These brave men and women of the Resistance who, for the most part, were engaging in hazardous enterprise and risking their lives under no other compulsion than belief in a cause and unsweaving determination to free their homeland, unquestionably made a sizable contribution to the liberation. General Eisenhower has written of the FFI in his official report:

When our armor had swept past them they were given the task of clearing up localities where pockets of Germans remained, and of keeping open the Allied lines of communication. They also provided our troops with invaluable assistance in supplying information of the enemy's dispositions and intentions. Not least in importance, they had, by their ceaseless harassing activities, surrounded the Germans with a terrible atmosphere of danger and hatred which ate into the confidence of the leaders and the courage of the soldiers.

Yet the activities of the French Underground and the Allied encouragement of those activities raise some difficult moral questions.

One important consequence of the Resistance is a heritage which still clouds French unity. Taints of disgrace still pursue thousands of suspected "collaborators." In courts set up after the liberation, members of the Resistance tried no fewer than 129,000 of their countrymen on charges of treason or collaboration. Of these, 791 were executed, 38,000 were given prison sentences, and 48,000 were tainted with "national indignity." Thousands of others carried the burdens of suspicion. (On the other hand, the patriots had been the victims of similar courts set up by Pétain and collaborationist generals in 1940). But here the question is whether the United States was justified in encouraging the French to do what the United States itself considers war crimes.

International law, as interpreted by the United States, does in fact *require* a certain amount of collaboration with an occupying enemy. War Department Field Manual 27-10, *Rules of Land Warfare*, said on the subject:

301. *Reciprocal obligations of inhabitants.* — In return for such considerate treatment, it is the duty of the inhabitants to carry on their ordinary peaceful pursuits; to behave in an absolutely peaceful manner; to take no part whatever in the hostilities carried on; to refrain from all injurious acts toward the troops or in respect to their operations; and to render strict obedience to the officials of the occupant.

. . . . .

303. *General right to requisition services.* — Services of the inhabitants of occupied territory may be requisitioned for the needs of the army. These will include the services of professional men, and tradesmen, such as surgeons, carpenters, butchers, bakers, etc.; employees of gas, electric light, and water works, and other public utilities; and of sanitary boards in connection with their ordinary functions. The officials and employees of railways, canals, river or coast-wise steamship companies, telegraph, postal, and similar services, and drivers of transport, whether employed by the State or private companies, may be requisitioned to perform their professional duties so long as the duties required do not directly concern the operations of war against their own country.

304. . . . In short, under the rules of obedience, they may be called upon to perform such work as may be necessary for the ordinary purposes of government, including police and sanitary work.

What kind of justice is it which condemns men for carrying out these legal obligations in good faith? Yet it was the policy of Americans, who later would be demanding this same cooperation from the civil population of occupied Germany, to urge the French to risk their lives in resorting to a type of warfare recognized as contrary to the laws of war. Harry C. Butcher, aide to General Eisenhower, wrote: "Groups organized for resistance throughout France are to do their stuff on receipt of action messages from the BBC which will be issued by SHAEF authority in London. Their action is in-

tended to delay enemy forces moving by rail and road, to sabotage enemy telecommunications, and to carry out general guerrilla tasks.”<sup>1</sup>

Indeed the activities of the French Underground read like a listing of the acts prohibited by the rules of warfare. They undoubtedly amounted to technical acts of “war treason.” This is the law as stated in *Rules of Land Warfare*:

349. *War rebels*. — War rebels are persons within territory under hostile military occupation who rise in arms against the occupying forces or against the authorities established by the same. If captured they may be punished with death, whether they rise singly or in small bands, whether or not they have been called upon to do so by their own expelled government, and, in event of conspiracy to rebel, whether or not such conspiracy shall have matured by overt act of hostility.

350. *War treason*. — Examples of acts which, when committed by inhabitants of territory under hostile military occupation, are punishable by the occupying belligerent as treasonable under laws of war, are as follows: Espionage; supplying information to the enemy; damage to railways, war material, telegraphs or other means of communication; aiding forces or members thereof; intentional misleading of troops while acting as guides; voluntary assistance to the enemy by giving money or acting as guides; inducing soldiers of the occupying forces to act as spies for the enemy, to desert, or to surrender; bribing soldiers in the interest of the enemy; damage or alteration to military notices and signposts in the interest of the enemy; fouling sources of water supply and concealing animals, vehicles, supplies, and fuel in the interest of the enemy; knowingly aiding the advance or retirement of the enemy; and circulating propaganda in the interests of the enemy.

On the other hand, it would seem to a reasonable American that a person willing to fight for his homeland ought to be praised rather than condemned. And if his actions are illegal and punishable by death, then his praise should be all the greater for his assuming those greater risks. (This seems especially true, of course, if the patriot is fighting on our side against a common enemy!) Perhaps the laws of war, in this age of total war, have become outmoded on these points, and ought to be changed to recognize certain rights of belligerency for citizens in their own homelands against hostile occupying forces. But that would leave only one alternative to an advancing army: to drive the entire population, other than willing and trustworthy collaborators, before it as refugees; and surely that would be even more brutal than the ruthless (but legal) steps taken to put down guerrilla warfare when that is necessary.

A very real effort was made to deal with this problem in the framing of a Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War at Geneva as one of the new series of Geneva Conventions for the Protection of War Victims of 1949. Ratified by the United States in 1956, these conventions are significant for

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<sup>1</sup> *My Three Years with Eisenhower* (New York, 1946), 541.

American policy as well as for those of other countries. The Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons runs to 159 articles. At the very beginning, in Article 3, it strikes at the inhuman actions of which the Germans were guilty in France:

(1) Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed *hors de combat* by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria.

To this end, the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons:

- (a) violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture;
- (b) taking of hostages;
- (c) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment;
- (d) the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples.

Later articles prohibit the deportation of people from an occupied territory, the forcible drafting of nationals of an occupied country to serve in the armed forces of the occupying power, requiring people of an occupied territory to work at tasks other than those necessary for the needs of the local population or the needs of the army of occupation, and they make other provisions for the protection of the civilian population. These rules of course struck against such arbitrary and inhuman acts as the hanging of hostages at Tulle, or the massacres at Oradour-sur-Glane and Robert Espagne.

Nevertheless, acts of sabotage and guerrilla warfare remain illegal under the new convention. Article 68 provides:

. . . Persons who commit an offence which is solely intended to harm the Occupying Power, but which does not constitute an attempt on the life or limb of members of the occupying forces or administration, nor a grave collective danger, nor seriously damage the property of the occupying forces or administration or the installations used by them, shall be liable to internment or simple imprisonment, provided the duration of such internment or imprisonment is proportionate to the offence committed. Furthermore, internment or imprisonment shall, for such offences, be the only measure adopted for depriving protected persons of liberty. . . .

The penal provisions promulgated by the Occupying Power may impose the death penalty on a . . . person only in cases where the person is guilty of espionage, of serious acts of sabotage against the military installations of the occupying Power or of intentional offences which have caused the death of one or more persons, provided that such offences were punishable by death under the law of the occupied territory in force before the occupation began.

(The United States attached a reservation to this article to the effect that it reserves the right to impose the death penalty without regard to whether the offences referred to are punishable by death under the law of the occupied territory at the time the occupation begins.)

One member of the wartime French Underground expressed a certain disillusionment and disgust over postwar developments. This person, while clearly friendly to Americans, was also frankly critical. He wanted nothing to do with any resistance movements next time. Why should they organize an underground? he asks. Occupying soldiers are all about alike. Really, what difference does it make whether France is occupied by Americans or English or Russians? If you don't resist, they won't harm you. The German occupation was very difficult only because the French never ceased fighting back. He would still take risks to help friends or individuals, but wants no part of any organization. In fact, next time, his first thought in case of invasion would be to flee the country.

Much of this attitude of resignation is attributed to disgust with the failure of American intelligence to offer any cooperation for a continued organization, or to give any heed to their friendly warnings. Specifically these warnings included notice that (1) the Russians in 1946 were moving a large stock of uranium; and (2) a Russian espionage agent was known to be operating in Nancy and was in contact with a Russian official who was posing as a tourist.

Furthermore, certain members of the old organization wanted to maintain a skeleton organization, equipped with American radios, which would become active in the event of a Soviet occupation. But the Americans would not furnish the radio sets unless they could have the names of all the French who were going to participate. The French answered that they would name seven or eight leaders, but they could go no further than that. They were afraid that if and when an invasion came the Americans would pull out, and the lists of names would fall into the hands of the Russians.

This citizen of Nancy thinks Americans act very much like children. And in their immaturity and inexperience they fail to recognize the value of centuries of French experience. He hates the patronizing attitude which Americans frequently exhibit—their treatment of the French as though they (the French), in their insecurity and concern, are just having a nightmare, "but now your Uncle Sam is here, and everything is going to be all right."

For the people of Nancy and Lorraine, the leaders of the wartime Resistance remain among their greatest heroes. These include men like Lieutenant Jacques Driou who was born in Paris in 1892, served as a volunteer in the war of 1914-1918, who organized a clandestine postal service between occupied and unoccupied France in August and September 1940, was held a prisoner by the Germans

for a year, and on his return helped other prisoners escape; he fell at the head of his group at Malzéville on September 15, fighting for a bridge while awaiting the arrival of the Americans. They include men like Jean Barbier, twenty-one years old, a brilliant student of the Superior School of Chemical Industries, who was killed at the Bayon bridge. They include the leaders of the Resistance organization, men of many varying political opinions who served on the departmental committee of liberation, such as Jean Prouve, who also served as mayor of Nancy, and now is a manufacturer of prefabricated houses there.

West of Nancy, on the high ground where Task Force Sebree was dissolved to allow the 134th Infantry to move into the city for the Liberation a great monument now stands —

TO THE HEROES KNOWN AND UNKNOWN  
OF THE RESISTANCE  
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THE LIBERATION  
OF FRANCE

This Monument was erected by subscription in order to perpetuate  
the memory of their sacrifice.

The monument consists of a great stone tablet, in brown granite and marble, with steps leading up to a stone platform in front of it, flanked by a low pillar on either side, and with an urn at the front center. The inscriptions are carved against a gold background.

The urn, with a flame of liberty carved over it, carries the words:

IN THIS URN  
ARE DEPOSITED  
ASHES OF  
RESISTANTS FROM THE CAMPS OF DEATH

General de Gaulle's broadcast from London of June 18, 1940, "To All France: France has lost a battle, but France has not lost the war . . ." is carved on the base of the left pillar. On the floor of the stone platform are these words:

AT THE EMPLACEMENT OF THIS MONUMENT  
FRENCH PRISONERS OF WAR WERE SHOT  
IN 1940 AND FROM 1940 TO 1944 IN THE  
NEIGHBORING WOODS "LA MALPIERRE"  
MEMBERS OF THE RESISTANCE FROM  
ALL FRANCE THIS WAS THE WAR OF  
UNKNOWN SOLDIERS

# 12

## Nancy and Lorraine in Peace

Economically, Lorraine presents much the same balance which is characteristic of France as a whole. While Meurthe-et-Moselle—the department of which Nancy is capital—is perhaps the poorest in agricultural production among the four departments which may be included in the historical province of Lorraine, it still makes a sizable contribution toward the sustenance of Nancy and the suburbs. And when it comes to mining iron and salt, this department is among the richest in all France. Given the abundance of these resources in the region, it follows almost automatically that metal working and glass making will be important trades in Nancy. But this does not give the whole picture. Dozens of manufacturing and commercial enterprises flourish in and about the city, and the result is the kind of diversification usually sought for the economic well-being of a community of this kind.

The countryside around Nancy is generally rolling, and woods, crops, and pastures lend an attractive appearance to the scene. It remains much as it was in 1918 when Frederick Palmer wrote of it:

When you know Lorraine it seems fitting that it should have given Joan of Arc to France. Today you may still see such peasant girls as she was, straight as young birch trees. . . . The villages have changed little since she tended her flocks and the character of the people is much the same as when she went forth from shepherding her flocks to lead an army. From high ground clusters of red roofs break into view on the rich river bottoms and in valleys mottled with woodlands and pastures, but proximity removes some of the charm and picturesqueness as you enter narrow streets where manure is piled in front of the house door.<sup>1</sup>

While farms in France average but twenty-four acres, some of those around Nancy are fairly large even by standards of the Ameri-

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<sup>1</sup> *America in France* (New York, 1918), 36.



can Midwest. Ferme St. Jacques, near the northeast corner of the city, spreads over 150 hectares (370 acres). A revisit to St. Jacques revealed a farm little changed from the war years. Indeed it appeared probable that it had changed little from the years of World War I. The madame had just returned with the pneumatic-tired, one-horse milk wagon, and now she busied herself in the big but unkempt kitchen while two young men looked after some horses in the farmyard. Her husband and son were working that day at their other farm near Lunéville (about fifteen miles southeast of Nancy). A pile of vegetables covered the big, rough-hewn table at one side of the kitchen, and pots and pans in considerable disarray were spread over the coal range and work tables. The farm had the benefit of electricity, but few other modern conveniences were in evidence. The unpainted barns, the farm animals, the piles of manure, the big but untidy house contributed an appearance and an atmosphere which might well have fitted a midwestern farm of the United States in the early 1920's. Yet St. Jacques seemed to be contributing an abundance of foodstuffs, and its fields of wheat, beets, rye, and vegetables added a sense of security as well as depth of beauty to the landscape.

Another farm a few miles east of Nancy—Ferme Rhin du Bois—had a considerably greater atmosphere of prosperity: trim farm buildings and stock pens, and a large brick farm house with red tile roof, full plumbing, a refrigerator, exquisite furnishings.

More common than these larger, more or less self-contained farms are the farm villages where several families—and their cows—live close together and farmers go out daily to work their acreage near the village.

Most of the wheat from all these farms flows to the big mill—the Grands Moulins Vilgrain of Nancy—which has risen on the ashes of the one burned in the German withdrawal of 1944. A trim brick structure ten stories high and perhaps two hundred feet along, the main building sits amid neat, green lawns and beds of roses on the banks of the Meurthe River. The French probably lead the world in per-capita consumption of wheat flour, and the renowned French bread always has a prominent place in the local diet. It was inevitable, therefore, that the rebuilding of the mill should have high priority in the postwar reconstruction program. Seven or eight years after liberation, le Grands Moulins Vilgrain (GMV), with a force of three hundred men working in three eight-hour shifts, was producing 4,500 quintaux (450,000 kilograms, or the equivalent of 5,100 barrels according to American reckoning) of flour a day for the bread of Nancy and surrounding communities.

Genial, hard-working Eucien Kauff was general superintendent of GMV. A veteran of World War I, former chief adjutant of the 8th Chasseurs à pied, the mill superintendent recalled in vivid terms his

view of the crossing of the Meurthe River by the U.S. 134th Infantry in September 1944.

When that attack began, M. Kauff was working in his garden between the mill and the river. He could look to his left across the stream, and see a German soldier firing his rifle. He looked to his right, and saw Americans swarming around the mill warehouses. Obviously he was in an unenviable position of crossfire, but he hurried back to greet the Americans.

The mill superintendent insisted on showing the route they took that day. Now, as then, he took his big key to open the gate which permitted entry into a lane running between stone and concrete walls obliquely to the river bank. He showed, correctly, where the soldiers walked. He said that a big, young sergeant had walked down ahead of the troops—he probably was an engineer looking for the place to put in a guide rope. As they had come to the end of the lane, M. Kauff had opened the last gate, and he warned the sergeant to keep low, for the Germans could see from the other side. But the sergeant, sensing no danger, and, probably not understanding, stepped out of the lane boldly to make for the water's edge. A German machine gunner had a true aim. A long burst had caught the sergeant at the waist. He had died instantly.

A mill hand came up to join his recollections with those of the superintendent. They spoke as if they felt a kinship with the sergeant who had died there. They remembered the pictures he carried in his pocket. His memory seemed uppermost in all their thoughts of the liberation.

Although the agriculture of Lorraine is able to feed most of the local population, far more significant economically is the development of mining and manufacturing there. Of a working population of about 251,000 in the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle, 132,000 work in industry and transportation. The minette iron-ore deposits of Lorraine are to be compared with the Mesabi of Minnesota as among the richest producing areas in the world. Meurthe-et-Moselle, together with its sister department of Moselle (of which Metz is the capital) produces nearly 95 per cent of the iron ore in France—making France the third most important iron-ore producing country, after the United States and the Soviet Union, in the world. The soil and the factories of these departments yield, moreover, 78 per cent of the cast iron of France, 67 per cent of the steel, 98 per cent of the rock salt, 50 per cent of the refined salt, 95 per cent of the soda. Production of iron ore in the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle alone was at the rate of about 36,000,000 tons a year during the early 1960's, while the production of pig iron in the department rose 8 per cent in 1960 and another 6 per cent in 1961 to a total in the latter year of about 5,500,000 tons; and steel production, rising 9.3

and 4 per cent during those years reached 5,120,000 tons. Production of rock salt, up 14 per cent over the previous year, was 177,700 tons in 1961, and refined salt production, up by 6 per cent, totaled 210,000 tons.

Mining activities at Nancy's northern suburb of Maxéville give a striking demonstration of the region's two most important mineral resources. There, from a dark tunnel which runs back several kilometers from an opening in the side of a hill—a tunnel which served during the war as a secret hideout for the Resistance—iron ore once again comes forth. Several hundred feet above the iron mine, rock salt is being brought out from the great open pit which once offered welcome cover and concealment to American troops moving down on Nancy. Here mining goes on at two levels, one almost directly above the other, to contribute to the return of prosperity, not only to Nancy and Lorraine, but to Europe in general.

A walk back into the mine serves only to emphasize the cold dampness and complete darkness of this subterranean passage even on a warm, bright day. Now eighty men, in two daily shifts, work the mine. The manager explained that the ore here is not high grade. He gave the iron content as only 30 per cent and said that it contains 9 to 10 per cent lime and about 20 per cent silica. In addition there is the inevitable 1.7 to 1.9 per cent of phosphorous common in the iron of Lorraine.

Ordinarily iron ore of no greater metallic content than this would not be considered susceptible to commercial exploitation. However, the ores of Lorraine, with their varying content of lime and silica can be mixed to produce a self-fluxing, easily smelted combination. This of course means an important saving in avoiding the common requirement of adding some five hundred to a thousand tons of limestone, as flux, for each thousand tons of iron recovered from a blast furnace. Another advantage in economical exploitation of this low-grade iron ore is the proximity of the Saar coal field about fifty miles northeast of Nancy. Though the metallic content is low, the total resources are huge. Estimated at something over five billion tons, the iron-ore reserves of Lorraine are as great as those of all the rest of Europe, outside of the Soviet Union, combined.

Most of this huge reserve has come into prominence since the Franco-Prussian War. Fortunately for France, the German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine omitted some of those districts which were to prove the richest in iron-ore deposits. The phosphorous in the iron made it unsuitable for steel until the Thomas-Gilchrist basic process, introduced with the Bessemer converter in 1877, turned that disadvantage into an actual economic asset. Now the slag resulting from this dephosphoration is much sought after for agriculture. The Martin open-hearth process also gained in importance for certain kinds of steel until it was equal to about half of the Thomas output. After re-

maining virtually at a standstill during the war, recovery of the iron and steel industry of Lorraine began rapidly in 1945, and a program of modernization and expansion began. By 1954 there were in operation in the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle sixty-six blast furnaces, ten Thomas (Bessemer) steel mills with a total of forty-five converters, ten Martin openhearth plants with sixteen furnaces, and seven electric furnaces, as well as four hundred coke ovens. From this point production expanded rapidly. At the end of 1962 the department had 110 blast furnaces, 86 Thomas converters, 39 Martin furnaces, 14 electric furnaces. New methods were introduced which required less coking coal. A new method of steel-making introduced in 1960 promised to be as revolutionary as had been the introduction of the Thomas-Gilchrist process. This was the basic oxygen process. Experiments with this process had begun in Germany in 1941. Suspended during the war, they were resumed in Austria in 1949, and a year later small production units went into operation at Linz and Donawitz. Begun in France in 1960, the new method of blowing oxygen in the molten metal quickly caught on. It produced steel comparable to the best Martin, and at a much lower cost. It was expected that by 1965 over 23 per cent of the steel in Lorraine would be produced by the oxygen process. This did not mean that the output of Thomas, Martin, and electric-furnace steel would be less, but that most of the new production would be by the new method, and the relative share of the older methods in total output would decline. With over twelve million tons of steel in 1961, the steel production of Lorraine surpassed the total steel production of France before World War II, and plans called for an annual production in this region of 16,500,000 tons by 1965.<sup>2</sup>

The Maxéville mine is only one of several which this particular company, known as ARBED operates. From here most of the ore goes by boat on the Marne-Rhine canal to blast furnaces near Sarreguemines where it meets the coal of the Saar and the Ruhr.

Nearby iron forms the basis for scores of other manufacturing enterprises in and around Nancy: electric motors and generators, as at Constructions Électriques Nancy on Rue Pierre-Villard, and Cie. Générale Électrique on Rue Oberlin; machine tools at P. Trummel, on Rue de Laxou; structural works, as Constructions Métalliques Schertzer and Cie. on Quai René II, Les Constructions Mécaniques of St. Max, or Usine Panlz in Jarville. One of the most modern factories in Nancy is that of Fer Embal, makers of metal containers; its plant covers ten thousand square meters of floor space. Other metal work includes copper, brass, and bronze.

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<sup>2</sup> See Charles de Vaulx, *L'Economie Lorraine à L'Heure du Marché Européen* (Nancy, 1962), 57-65; *The Basic Oxygen Process, Contributions to the Metallurgy of Steel*, American Iron and Steel Institute, April 1957.

In contrast with the long, dark tunnel which the iron mine occupies, the mining operations which go on directly above are completely in the open. There big power shovels dig out rock salt and keep trains busy on the narrow-gauge railroads which run through and around the pits.

Salt surely is one of the most important chemical products in the world. History has turned on the location of saltlicks or other sources of salt. During the closing months of World War II, when most of their merchant fleet had been destroyed and serious shortages were developing in many critical materials, the Japanese diverted most of their remaining merchant ships to the carrying of salt. More salt goes into the manufacture of chemicals than any other material. Americans consume an average of six pounds a year each in seasoning for food.

The rock salt from Maxéville goes, for the most part, a short distance up the Meurthe River to the Solvay plant at Dombasle (south-east of Nancy) where it is converted, by the Solvay process, to soda ash. The Solvay Company operates the mine as well as the factory. The mine superintendent is M. Nangin, who began working here in 1927. He shows a keen interest in his work. Operations go on night and day, seven days a week. Two hundred men work in three eight-hour shifts. American power shovels, bulldozers, and derricks suggest the important role which the Marshall Plan played in making possible the importation of this equipment in permitting an effective resumption of operations. But this is not to suggest that all, or even most, of the machinery is American-made. Big diesel locomotives, engines, and trucks bear the Renault mark. The big electric motor was made by General Electric of France.

M. Nangin proudly showed the new, very modern snack bar and rest room which have been built for the workers. This completed a general impression of hard, satisfying, important work going on under highly satisfactory working conditions.

Until 1791 the ashes of sea plants provided the chief source of soda ash. When supplies were cut off during the Revolution, the French Academy offered a prize of 100,000 francs for the development of a process which would produce sodium carbonate from common salt. By 1791 Nicolas Le Blanc had developed such a method. He never did receive the prize money, however, and in 1806 he took his own life. But the process was named for him. In 1863 a cheaper and simpler process, developed by the Belgian scientist, Ernest Solvay, superseded the Le Blanc process. The Solvay or ammonia process soon spread over Europe and America, and it made a fortune for its inventor. In the valleys of the Meurthe and the Moselle are found both salt and limestone—the materials necessary for the Solvay process. And the Solvay Company's operations at Maxéville and Dombasle make available to Nancy the soda ash essential for several

of its other important industries: glass, leather, soap, paper, enamels, dyestuffs.

For the visitor there is perhaps no greater indication of postwar recovery in Nancy than the attractive displays of fine glassware and crystal which command his attention in shops along Rue St. Dizier and in the outstanding Daum display on the Rue Héré. Artistic glass-making in Nancy owes much of its modern prominence to Émile Gallé, known as the "promoter of the Lorraine renaissance after 1870," and to the Daum brothers who moved to Nancy after the German annexation of their native Alsace. The modern Daum factory continues its high-quality glassmaking on Avenue du XX Corps near the Meurthe River. Another outstanding craftsman in cut crystal is Roger Olliot on Place André Maginot; he won distinction as "best artisan of France" in 1938, won a gold medal at the Troyes exposition that same year, and came back to win the Grand Honor Prize at the Nancy Artisan Exposition in 1946. Much to the satisfaction of a wide clientele, the Benoit brothers, specialists in stained-glass windows, were able to resume their trade May 1, 1946. M. Georges Gross wins continuing acclaim in his modern handling of stained glass. Perhaps the best-known town in French glassmaking is Baccarat, about thirty miles southeast of Nancy. In 1765 the St. André glassworks was established there; in 1822 it became la Compagnie des Cristalleries de Baccarat, and its goblets, chandeliers, and art glass have won world renown.

Similarly, other artistic crafts flourish again in Nancy and the valleys of the Meurthe and Moselle: the ceramics of Camille Muller on Rue Lyautey, the artistic work in iron and in britannia metal of L. Simonin on Avenue Ste. Anne, the faïence of half a dozen towns of the department. Hand embroidery work also has returned to a level of its pre-war activity. The introduction of machine embroidery after 1871 threatened, for a time, to eclipse the hand work, but it was not able to supersede the "Nancy School." Lorraine peasants like to spend their long winter evenings at this fascinating work, and as a result, it continues to be in large part a domestic industry. Woodworking is another of those crafts which, in Nancy, continues to be an art as well as an industry. The name of Louis Majorelle belongs with those of Émile Gallé, the Daum brothers, Victor Prouve, and others, as a founder of the artistic movement referred to as the "Nancy School." Abandoning the practice of copying classical styles, Majorelle introduced the "Modern style" and he made of marquetry and cabinetmaking a fine art. In spite of war and economic difficulties the house of Majorelle has been able to husband stocks of fine wood from Lorraine and from the French colonies, and to train new skilled workers to continue its place in the forefront of French master

cabinetmakers. The success of its more than half a century of leadership in the field can be seen at 20 Rue St. Georges.

But the diversification of industry in and about Nancy goes much further. Woolen textiles, hosiery, ready-to-wear clothing, lingerie and underwear, and bedclothes come from Nancy's mills and factories. Men find work at making barrels and casks; in the tannery and the shoe factories; in construction work; in cement, brick, and tile works; in the production of slaked lime.

Other local industries aim at the satisfaction of hunger and thirst—the canning of fruits and vegetables, the production of biscuits, pastries, macaroons. Probably best known of these industries are chocolate and beer. Chocolat Stanislas is in Essey-lès-Nancy (across the Meurthe River to the east), and Chocolat Lorraine in Laxou-Nancy (a western suburb).

Actually the breweries are considered locally to be next in importance after the iron and salt mines. In 1606 English Benedictines at Dieulouard (about twelve miles north of Nancy) introduced the process of top fermentation—still associated with English beer, or ale, stout, and bitter. About the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the bottom-fermented lager beer succeeded the older product and quickly the beer of Lorraine won fame throughout France. One of the largest breweries in the Nancy area is at Champigneulle (immediately north of Maxéville, on the Meurthe River). The brewery at Tantonville (fifteen miles south of Nancy) was the site of Pasteur's experiments in 1876 on the causes of fermentation which led to the discovery of microbes. The University of Nancy maintains a school of brewing which prepares engineers for the industry.

Manufacture of soft carbonated drinks also holds an important place in Nancy. Lorraine Gazeuse, on Rue Gabriel Mouilleron, traces its history back to 1840. A combination of several companies in 1921, under the direction of an energetic and skilled manager, M. Schaeffer, led to its development to first rank among plants of its kind in that region.

With excellent balance in resources and in production—food, clothing, shelter; minerals, timber, art work—Nancy and Lorraine thus have capabilities for maintaining a healthy economy at a high level of prosperity. In comparison with other cities of Eurpoe, the standard of living here probably is good, but it seems low in comparison with most of the United States. Rising prices continue to be a problem. Even when figured at the current free exchange rate of the franc, prices for most common necessities, except for bread and milk, seem high to the American. In November 1958 beef (good, but not the best quality) was selling at a dollar a pound, and butter and coffee also were a dollar a pound. Sugar was eleven cents a pound, pastry flour nine cents, salt five cents, potatoes three cents, eggs

seventy-two cents a dozen, salad oil forty-seven cents a quart, bread was the equivalent of nine cents for a pound and a half, and milk twelve cents a quart. Men's shoes were eleven dollars for a good pair, and thirteen to eighteen dollars for the best quality; resoling of shoes (in leather) costs three dollars. Coal was selling for \$32 to \$47 a ton. Prevailing wages could not go far against these prices. Minimum monthly income for a single, unskilled laborer was about \$57.20; for single, semiskilled and skilled workers, about \$66 to \$99, and for single, graduate specialists, about \$110 to \$132. Average incomes were, of course, substantially above the minimum, and the man with a family had a considerably higher income. For housework women were paid a minimum of thirty-three cents an hour with meals, or forty-cents an hour without meals.

One cannot escape an awareness that the heavy hand of war still casts its shadow over this area. If only wars would not disturb things, surely an economic prosperity could thrive in the valleys of the Meurthe and Moselle which would be unsurpassed in Europe. But France and some element of the German nation have been on opposing sides in every general European war since 1600—France has been at war with the Holy Roman Empire, Prussia, or modern Germany twenty-one times since 1512, and Lorraine has often been the center of conflict. The wonder is that people can continue to work and hope as much as they do in those circumstances.

On the other hand, it is quite possible that without the challenge of war, Lorraine never would have developed to the extent that it has. The great iron resources were little developed until after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, and the "Lorraine Renaissance" in arts and crafts also followed that catastrophic war. Nancy and those parts of Lorraine remaining in France after Germany had annexed Metz and the major parts of Lorraine showed new vigor and determination in the years which followed. The people here shared with all France that determination to recover national strength and to escape German domination which resulted in the amazingly rapid payment of the seemingly huge war indemnity of one billion dollars assessed by the Germans. By 1914 France, with the aid of the British, was able to fight the great German war machine on virtually even terms for nearly four years. However, the wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45 were extremely costly—the French had nearly three times as many casualties in World War I alone as the United States has had in all its wars from the Revolution to Korea inclusive. If wars have ever served as a challenge to bring forth a response in determined activity in France, that point seems to have been so far passed that the question for this generation has come to be survival itself.

War, or even international tension, threatens economic activity in Lorraine not only by the dangers of direct destruction, but also by indirect consequences. In spite of abundant and balanced local re-



sources, much of the manufacturing depends upon imports, and much of the prosperity depends upon the sale of exports. When threats of war, or international economic or political difficulties, interfere with the movement of goods across national boundaries, industries of Lorraine suffer. Availability of German coal affects the iron output; American and Egyptian cotton, Italian silk, and South American wool affect the textile mills. Moreover, the art industries which are so important for local prosperity are by their nature as producers of luxury goods very sensitive to economic conditions, and economic depression will make itself more quickly felt there than anywhere else. If the movements toward European integration—the Schuman Plan, the European Assembly, Western European Union, and finally the Common Market—can bring economic and political stability in the years ahead, Nancy and Lorraine should afford excellent opportunities for making a good living and living a good life.

The whole aspect of Nancy extended to the American visitor of the 1950's something of a feeling that he had escaped the bonds of time to walk across his own homeland during the early, prosperous 1920's. The horses on the farms, the old barns and farmhouses; the little wooden streetcars clanging noisily down Rue St. Jean; the undersize, quaint-looking autos scurrying to and fro; the house furnishings of middle-class families—tall, wooden floorlamps with fringed shades, ceiling light fixtures, fringed drapes; bicycle traffic in the streets; canal boats in Port Ste. Catherine and Port St. Georges; the old elevators in public buildings—all these add to that impression. By the 1960's this was rapidly changing. The streetcars disappeared, horses were less numerous, and auto traffic was heavier. Here one now finds much that is modern and new. And, as in any old country, this creates striking contrasts: airplanes flying over two-wheeled, horsedrawn carts; modern, streamlined diesel trains (some with rubber tires) speeding past a dirty local train with small steam locomotive and aged wooden cars; sleek, high-speed sports cars crossing the bridge near old canal boats. Some houses have automatic washers, but in Maxéville women still gather at the public washhouse to do their family washing in the cold water running through concrete troughs. The contrasts suggest the kind of social problems that arise wherever such a continuous and radical change disturbs the settled patterns of generations.

In the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle in 1947 there was one automobile for each seventeen inhabitants; in France as a whole there was one for each eighteen. There was one bicycle for every three people—the same as for all France. The ratio of telephone subscribers, one of every thirty-eight inhabitants was somewhat below the general average of one of every twenty-seven, and the ratio of

radios, one for each five inhabitants, was the same as for France as a whole.

In spite of all the problems, the general outlook seems to be one of happiness. Local inhabitants are enthusiastic sports fans, inveterate travelers, and lovers of spectacles. When the celebrated bicycle race around France—the Tour de France—is on, crowds gather periodically in front of the big bulletin board at the newspaper offices (*L'Est Républicain*) to see the latest standings. Last summer's race bypassed Nancy, but while it was on, a local "minor league" race took place—the Tour de Lorraine. In the Plateau de Malzéville, where German war planes once were based, a glider club is active now, and visitors may get refreshments of wine, beer, or Coca Cola at a stand in the woods.

Most passenger trains going in or out of the big station on Place Thiers are crowded. Local travelers often check bicycles to go on the baggage car, and when they reach their destination they have their transportation with them for a visit out to the country.

Early July 14—Bastille Day—crowds of people are thronging the streets. Farmers from the surrounding countryside, dressed in their best, join friends from the city and make their way toward the Place Stanislas for a military parade and ceremonies which begin at 9:30 A.M. The annual *Faire-Exposition*, with exhibitions and rides and amusements, opens this day in Course Leopold. In the evening the crowds move back to Place Stanislas for a gigantic and colorful fireworks display. It is a holiday like the traditional July 4 celebration in America. September 15—the day of liberation—continues to be a day of celebration in Nancy. Some of the younger set celebrate two or three days: Nancy has its celebration, with dancing in the streets until the late hours of the night, on the fifteenth, while Malzéville and other communities across the river celebrate their liberation on the sixteenth.

The Municipal Theatre on Place Stanislas, a dozen motion-picture theatres, boxing matches, the museums in the Ducal Palace, and art exhibits offer other recreational opportunities.

Nancy's position on important rail lines and highways; its proximity to Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, and Switzerland; and its recreational, cultural, and educational attractions make it an important tourist center. But American tourists are relatively few; most of the tourists are European. They can find a double room at Hôtel Marechal Foch for two dollars, or at the Grand Hôtel Thiers for three dollars, and at sixty other hotels at similar rates. A ham sandwich costs sixteen cents, and a piece of fruit cake six cents. A complete restaurant meal, including beefsteak, can be had for \$1.50.

Parks, flowers, trees, and shaded boulevards contribute much grace. Rose trees and rose gardens present an invitation to walk with beauty in the Parc Ste. Marie in the southwest section of the city. In

the Parc de la Pépinière, near the canal to the northeast, long rows of blue hydrangeas along the broad shaded walks; a central rose garden with pools and fountains; monkeys, deer, and other animals scrambling about their enclosures; storks and swans along the pools; and a band shell.

At night Nancy takes on added glamour; the colorful flower gardens are lit; floodlights play on the tower of St.-Epvre church, the fountains and statues in Place Stanislas, the Ducal Palace, and other public buildings; and neon lights play along the streets. Music of orchestras in the cafés, and from the dance halls—often talked about, but not so frequently attended by American soldiers in the area—drifts through the air. Crowds of Frenchmen, Algerians, European tourists and American soldiers, often traveling in pairs or in packs, are on the streets. Then the streets become empty, and lonely. In the wake of the return of American soldiers to the area since 1951, a bit of the Champs Elysées and Place Pigalle at night has come to Rue St. Jean and Rue St. Dizier in Nancy—to a far greater degree than was apparent during World War II.

Educational activities here center in the University of Nancy which offers higher education to over eight thousand students from Lorraine, other parts of France, the colonies, and foreign countries. The University consists of the four faculties traditionally found in French state universities—Law, Letters, Sciences, and Medicine—and, in addition, a fifth, the Faculty of Pharmacy. This was a result of the German annexation of Alsace; the Superior School of Pharmacy of Strasbourg was transferred to Nancy in 1872 where it came under the provisional administration of the Faculty of Medicine. It became autonomous in 1876, and in 1920 became a faculty of the University.

Something of the nature of the region which the University serves can be seen in the seven superior schools and institutes which, in addition to the courses in the pure sciences, are affiliated with the Faculty of Sciences: the National Superior School of Chemical Industries, National Superior School of Geology, the School of Brewing, the National Superior School of Electricity and Mechanics, the Agricultural Institute and the Colonial Institute, the School of Dairying, the National Superior School of Metallurgy and Mining Industry, the Commercial Institute, and, in 1961-62, the new Institute of Industrial Specialties. The University library has on its twenty-five kilometers of shelves some 900,000 volumes, and it receives regularly 2,500 periodicals. There is no central campus. The offices of the rector, the faculties of Law and Letters, and the metallurgy school all are on Place Carnot, a large, open square near the center of the city. The Cité Universitaire—beautiful, modern dormitories recently expanded to house 1,145 students—is in Monbois Park near the Avenue de la Libération. The faculties of Medicine and Pharmacy flank the big

Central Hospital—well known to many wounded American soldiers in 1944 and 1945—and are in close vicinity to the maternity hospital and to several smaller hospitals: St. Stanislaus, St. Julien, Villemen, Marin, Maringer, Alfred Fournier, Minzelin L'Huiller.

Other schools of national repute in Nancy are the National School of Waters and Forests, founded in 1824, the only school of its kind in France, under the jurisdiction of the French Ministry of Agriculture, the Regional School of Beaux Arts, and the Conservatory of Music.

Education in France is of course highly centralized, and secondary and primary education is integrated with the University. The Academy, headed by the rector of the University, embraces all educational activities of the district. Public secondary schools in Nancy include Lycée Jeanne d'Arc, Lycée Henry Poincaré, Collège Moderne de Jeunes Filles, L'École Nationale Professionnelle, and Collège Moderne et Technique. The Academy also maintains a regional youth and sports organization and a health service. It operates a committee to supervise service activities—board, lodging, travel, information—for university students.

A system of Catholic "free schools" (where the pupil must pay tuition) parallels the public secondary and primary schools. The question of state support for these Catholic schools in France has been a recurring political issue; it was the problem which prevented the approval of a new French cabinet for so many weeks after the 1951 national elections. And this problem has been especially touchy in Alsace-Lorraine, for during the period when anticlerical legislation in France had separated church and state, and had removed secondary education from control of the church, those provinces, under German rule, had retained a certain local autonomy which had permitted them to hold to their religious-educational institutions. After 1919, the recovered provinces vigorously opposed French attempts to extend to them the system of public education which had by then become common in other parts of France, leading to "the problem of Alsace-Lorraine," as it was called throughout most of the interwar period. Nancy itself, of course, escaped annexation, and if anything became more French than ever, but it was bound to be influenced by the problems of the people to the east with whom it sentimentally associated itself as the traditional capital.

In the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle the public schools are far more numerous than the private. Of the 116,200 pupils in the elementary schools in 1961, only 9,200 were in private schools, while in general and secondary schools, 6,460 of 27,500 were in private schools. In the technical schools on the other hand, 9,680 of 17,800 were in private schools.

In the last parliamentary elections Nancy and its department of Meurthe-et-Moselle reflected a political complexion not far different from that of France as a whole. If there is any difference it is in favor of French tradition and nationalism. Communist strength, in spite of the industrial character of the district, does not appear to be much greater here than in its national proportion (about 20 per cent of the total vote).

Of the six members of the Chamber of Deputies which Meurthe-et-Moselle elected in 1951, three were members of the Gaullist RPF, one was a member of the MRP, one was a Socialist, and one a Communist. The Socialist deputy served in the cabinet as Minister of Education. In the 1956 election the RPF no longer was active. The Communists gained a seat, the Socialist was re-elected, and the other three belonged to the Independent Peasant Party.

Under the Fourth Republic, election of candidates of several parties from the same electoral district was permitted. The department was the basis for the elections, and, in general, varying numbers of deputies, according to the department's population, were elected under a system of proportional representation. However, the election law of 1951 modified the PR system by permitting parties to enter a coupling-of-lists arrangement by which it was possible for a combination of lesser parties to bring together a total vote out-weighting the vote of some larger single party. Actually, this system operated to permit the moderate parties of the center to pool their votes to the disadvantage of the Communists, if no party won a majority. It also over-ruled the normal Communist advantage in those districts resulting from the fractionalizing of the larger anti-Communist vote.

No group in Meurthe-et-Moselle was able to win a clear majority in either 1951 or 1956.

Under the new constitution of the Fifth Republic, the system of proportional representation and departmental lists has been abandoned in favor of the single-member constituencies of the pre-war Third Republic. Now each department has been divided into districts corresponding to the number of deputies to which it is entitled—approximately one for every 93,000 inhabitants, with a minimum of two deputies for each department. These new election districts are somewhat larger than were the old election *arrondissements* under the Third Republic, and the total number of deputies for Metropolitan France has been reduced from 544 to 465. It was General de Gaulle's hope that the system of voting for single individual candidates rather than for party lists would de-emphasize to some extent the doctrinal issues among the parties. In the election of deputies, two ballots may be taken—the second a week after the first. If any candidate wins an absolute majority on the first ballot, he is elected. If there is no majority (and since there are likely to be five or six

candidates in each district, a majority is not to be expected very often), the second ballot is necessary, and then the candidate with a plurality is elected. No new candidates are permitted to enter the contest, but it is possible for parties to make arrangements whereby the candidate of one will withdraw in favor of the other in one district and vice versa in another district. Thus, the first ballot probably reflects more accurately the political sentiments of the voters.

About two weeks before the election each French voter receives a personally addressed envelope containing a leaflet for each candidate explaining his qualifications, program, and party affiliation. Parties running at least seventy-five candidates for seats in the parliament are each entitled to a five-minute television broadcast and to a five-minute radio broadcast over the French radio and television network, and a five-minute radio broadcast on each local station. During the campaigning period the candidates hold all kinds of political meetings and rallies, but attendance is not likely to be large. As some have put it in Nancy: "It is always the same story: before elections, promises of a heavenly life; after elections, the same old circus!" In contrast to the old French tradition of "When in doubt, vote left," many patriotic Frenchmen now advised, "Vote anti-Communist, and in the center . . . keep away from the extremes, right or left." But results showed more of a tendency to "vote de Gaulle."

Each candidate has to make a deposit of 1,000 new francs (about \$200), and those who fail to obtain 5 per cent of the vote on one of the ballots forfeit their deposits.

At the polling place each voter receives a printed ballot for each candidate showing his party affiliations, his present and past positions or occupations, and the name of his alternate. The voter then seals the one ballot of his choice in an envelope, and deposits it in the ballot box.

The listing of an alternate is an innovation of the new regime to avoid by-elections. Whenever for any reason a deputy is unable to complete his term in office, his alternate, a man who shares his views and was elected with him for the purpose, replaces him. This is especially important under the provision of the new constitution which forbids the holding of seats in the parliament by men serving in the cabinet.

Local elections have shown similar results. Of the thirty-seven members serving on the Nancy city council (elected for six-year terms), sixteen were RPF, fourteen were moderates, and seven were Communists. Nancy's representation in the General Council of the Department included four elected for the city, all moderates, and two elected from the two cantons, both RPF.

The barrage of political posters on the garden walls of Paris or in Normandy also appear in Nancy. Most posters seem to appeal to

national rather than local issues, and a dominating theme always is the promise or hope of peace.

On a wall along the sidewalk on Avenue du XX Corps, in east Nancy, someone back in 1951 had scrawled huge letters saying, "Truman is a war criminal!" Later, "Truman" had been crossed out and "Stalin" penciled in.

Some people in Nancy during the last several years had voiced complete lack of confidence in the government. The government is always in a mess, they said; all the many parties are always arguing with each other, and none can do anything. Maybe democracy itself is no good. What does the man in the street, or even the intellectual busy in his profession, know about the affairs of state? Maybe a strong leader is needed. They did not at first think that de Gaulle was the man. Later they became his staunch supporters, and others who still held hope for real democracy turned to him too.

By 1958, the RPF had given way to the Union for the New Republic (UNR). In the November 1962 elections, the UNR won 29.04 per cent of the votes cast in Meurthe-et-Moselle, while the Communists won 19.33 per cent on the first ballot. Independents voting "yes" for de Gaulle mainly because they saw no alternative received 30.24 per cent of the votes. In the final tally, Gaullists took 53.87 per cent of the votes, while 46.12 per cent were in opposition. The department sent four deputies of the UNR and three independents to the National Assembly.

Characteristics generally associated with France and the French are found also to be the outstanding characteristics of Nancy and western Lorraine. In general the outstanding features of France may be called its maturity and its excellent balance. Frenchmen tend to be very strongly attached to their homes, and they enjoy carrying on their habitual daily duties around their homes. France has excellent balance in climate, topography, agriculture, industry, and the arts. It is known as one of the principal wheat-growing countries of Europe; as the possessor of the greatest iron-ore deposits in Europe; as a manufacturing nation which aims at quality, design, and artistic finish in its products rather than mass production and heavy industry; as one of the leading nations of the world in silk, cotton, and woolen manufactures; as a leading maker of fine glass and porcelain; it is known for its excellent highway, railway, and waterway systems; it is known for its contributions to art, science, and literature—for all these things France has world prominence. And in each of these things Nancy and western Lorraine have special significance.

Here one finds the mixture of modern and antique. Here one finds political sentiments tending to the right of center but with important leftist elements. Here one gets the feel of the effects of repeated invasions and threats of war. Here is balanced economy and mature

disposition. If one would learn of France quickly, he probably could do no better than to acquaint himself intimately with Nancy and Lorraine.



PART FIVE

SARREGUEMINES:  
INDUSTRIAL  
FRONTIER



# 13

## Fall and Recovery

About a week after the liberation of Nancy in September 1944, the whole U.S. Third Army went into defensive positions a few miles to the east. There Patton's soldiers sat while major efforts continued to the north, and while Germans had a chance to strengthen the defenses protecting the frontier of their homeland and to make preparations for later counteroffensives. Then on November 8, the day after President Roosevelt's fourth-term election, the Third Army resumed the attack. Infantrymen of the 35th Division moved out of their sheltered foxholes in the Forêt de Gremecey across the wet, rolling fields, and with tanks of the 6th Armored Division operating in and out of their zone, made for Sarreguemines and the pre-war German border forty miles away. The weeks that followed were for them among the most difficult of the entire war.

Armistice Day 1944 found the 35th Division almost exactly where it had been on the first Armistice Day in 1918, but this day in 1944 was the occasion for just another attack in the march to the north-east. Through the cold rain of the bleak November day, columns of the 134th Infantry tramped through the valley to Gerbécourt and Vaxy, and along the wooded parallel ridges above, and then beyond Vannecourt, over the broad, open ridge above Dalhain. On November 13, the 3rd Battalion attacked over the season's first snow to take high, dominating Rougemont after a day-long fight that cost the battalion the most casualties it had suffered since "Bloody Sunday," south of Saint-Lô. This was a day that the men remembered as "Blue Monday" on Red Hill. The same evening, the 2nd Battalion, advancing through the valley below, captured the village of Achain, where Sergeant Junior J. ("Task Force") Spurrier of Bluefield, West Virginia, won the Congressional Medal of Honor for his exploits with rifle, automatic rifle, rockets, German grenade, and fire which re-

sulted in the death of twenty-five German soldiers and the capture of twenty others.

In six successive days of attack through woods, over hills covered with snow or mud, with temperatures hovering near the freezing point, and precipitation reported from one day to the next as "showers," "snow," "sleet," "rain," the weather began to claim more casualties than the enemy. On November 15 the 134th Infantry, after being caught briefly on the snow-covered slopes by friendly artillery fire, moved into Morhange, the scene of one of the first important battles between French and Germans in the first weeks of World War I. Now it was an important military supply point with large barracks in the east end, being defended by the German 11th Panzer Division which recently had been transferred from the Russian front. The U.S. 6th Armored Division came into the zone, and while the 134th Infantry paused in Morhange, the 137th and 320th regiments, with the tanks supporting, moved on through Harprich, Vallerange, Virming, Berig-Vinrange, Bertring, Gros-Tenquin, Linstroff, Ernstroff. Then the 134th Infantry marched to Hellimer, where it was attached to the 6th Armored Division for an attack on Putteltange.

The combined infantry-armored attacks were only partially successful. A deep antitank ditch forced the tanks into a position where they came under German fire. The ground had become completely water-soaked by the snows and rains of the last several days, and when the tanks attempted to deploy off the road, they bogged down almost at once, and there they became easy prey for hostile antitank guns. After a delay of several days, the 1st Battalion captured Putteltange in a completely successful night attack early on December 4. This opened the way to Sarreguemines, and the next morning the regiment marched on.

When, late in the afternoon, the 3rd Battalion "peeled off" to the right to take Neufgrange, the 2nd Battalion continued directly on to Sarreguemines. There it found German defenders again willing to put up a fight. Street fighting continued through much of the night. Not long afterward the units were able to consolidate their positions, and the major portion of Sarreguemines lying east of the Saar River was clear.

There still remained the problem of getting across the river. A day of reconnaissance failed to disclose any very satisfactory crossing sites within the city itself, but a patrol did find that one of a pair of damaged railway bridges forming a Y across the river at a point about three miles to the south was passable for foot troops. On the basis of this patrol's report, the regimental commander decided on a bold maneuver. Starting at five o'clock the next morning, December 8, all three battalions—1st, 2nd, and 3rd—crossed the partially destroyed railway bridge in single file. For nearly two hours men marched across the bridge without arousing any German reaction. Only as the

last platoon of the last company got across did German machine guns open fire. The 1st and 2nd battalions continued to the northeast, while the 3rd Battalion turned sharply to the right to advance along the river bank to take Sarreinsming, where engineers were to put in a bridge. A strong German counterattack, with some fifteen tanks, formed against the 2nd Battalion, now isolated from all friendly tanks, tank destroyers, or antitank guns. But other help responded quickly. An intensive barrage by nine battalions of field artillery and a timely air strike broke up the counterattack. All the next day the engineers worked in order to get a Bailey bridge in, and then the infantry battalions continued their attacks. But now the assault battalions of the 134th Infantry were bypassing Sarreguemines, and heading for the Blies River, which formed, after the return of the Saar Basin to Germany in 1935, the pre-war German boundary.

The task of completing the capture of the part of Sarreguemines lying to the east of the Saar River fell to the 137th Infantry. Crossing through the 134th's bridgehead on December 10, the 137th pressed the attack against the part of Sarreguemines still in German hands. The most serious fighting developed when the 2nd Battalion of the 137th ran into strong German forces ensconced in the big *faïencerie*, the porcelain factory along the east bank of the Saar River. After battling for four hours against the intensive small-arms fire and hand grenades, the Americans occupied the factory area. For their action here, Company F of the 137th Infantry won a Distinguished Unit Citation. The remainder of Sarreguemines finally was cleared the next day, December 11, and a thousand Allied prisoners of war whom the Germans had left behind were freed.

This was just five days before the Germans launched their counter-offensive through the Ardennes, and when the Third Army shifted its forces to strike back toward Bastogne, the Seventh Army operating on the southeast had to extend its forces to take over this part of the Third Army's sector along the Saar. Sarreguemines was threatened for a time in January when the Germans launched an attack around Bitche, fifteen to twenty miles to the east. Though the thinly spread American units then had to give up some ground, Sarreguemines itself remained secure.

War damage still is evident in Sarreguemines, though the reconstruction work is virtually completed. But it is nothing like the damage found in cities such as Saint-Lô, which were the victims of heavy bombing attacks. Most of the damage to Sarreguemines came from artillery fire and from the small-arms fire, rockets, and grenades of close-in street fighting. Bombs were responsible for demolishing most buildings in World War II. By comparison, the damage done by artillery and small-arms fire was superficial. Many buildings of Sarreguemines had to be repaired, but relatively few had to be completely rebuilt.

In contrast to what one finds in so many American towns, the banks of the Saar River in Sarreguemines are kept neat and beautifully landscaped. Neat paths, colorful flowers, grass, and benches invite women and children, philosophers, tired workers, and loafers to the banks for fresh air and sunshine; a watchful attendant keeps people off the grass. There also is a large, heavily wooded park high on the hill at the west side of the town where crowds of children play in the summertime.

Sarreguemine's busy railroad yards and stations, her streets crowded with traffic, canal boats dense on the river, a number of foundries and ironworks, the porcelain factory, a textile mill, a flour mill and other industries, half a dozen banks and a branch of the Bank of France, four cinemas, numerous hotels and restaurants, shops and garages, construction companies, five secondary schools, and forty-eight primary school classes—all give the immediate impression of a lively town. The narrow Blies River and the Saar River separate Sarreguemines from what is now the territory of the Saar, detached after the war and then restored to Germany. Located near the coal fields and steel mills of the Saar and Lorraine, astride the Saar River and connecting canal, and on important highways and railways connecting France and Germany, this city of sixteen thousand people has special importance for local commerce. Seven railway lines pass through, and the bulletin board in the passenger station lists the arrival and departure of more than fifty daily trains. The streets seem relatively wide for a French town, and more traffic lights are in evidence than in Orléans or Nancy.

In the afternoon several canal-boat barges can be seen from the new main bridge, Pont des Alliés, loaded with gravel or coal. Washed clothing flutters from lines on several of the boats like international signal code flags. The porcelain factory, the principal plant of Faïenceries de Sarreguemines, Digoïn, et Vitry-le-François, a corporation with capital assets of something over a million dollars, has been restored to production, but not on the same scale as before the war. Buildings and equipment were badly damaged during the heavy battling there in December 1945. The facilities which lay west of the river—across from the main plant—are not being restored. Now a new riverside drive has been built through that area. Before the war approximately 3,000 men were employed at the *faïencerie*; now only 1,400 work there. New machines have replaced some of the workers, but more important is the fact that the plant is operating on a smaller scale now than before the war—and it is no longer turning out the high quality of porcelain that it formerly did.

One of the foundries, Fonderies de Sarreguemines, is located on Rue Alexandre de Geiger, also east of the Saar River, and just a short distance south of the Blies. The manager is apologetic for the

relatively old equipment in use, but this is a small, independent company, restricted to a single plant, established in 1930. It was damaged but not destroyed during the war, and afterward most of the machines, some of which had been imported from Cincinnati, were restored to use.

This foundry turns out many different items of cast iron: heavy drill bottoms for piles for bridges in Indochina, standard ashtrays for passenger cars of the French railways, housings for electrical connections, and a great many other small items. At times the company has difficulty getting enough orders to keep it busy. It had a capacity of about 250 tons a month, but in one year recently its actual production was only about 120 tons a month. The working force included 150 laborers, five foremen, and one engineer. Most of the workers lived in Sarreguemines, but some came across the international boundary each day from the Saar Territory. There were a few Algerians and Moroccans. None of the workers had an automobile. They made enough to eat, and that was about all. They worked a forty-eight-hour week—eight and one-half hours a day Monday through Friday, and five and one-half hours on Saturday. Their monthly pay averaged from a minimum of \$71.50 to a maximum of \$128.70 a month. Many of the men supplemented their incomes by working small farms or gardens, and they had fifteen days off from the foundry each year for this purpose. In addition they had some seventeen holidays during the year—two days at Christmas and at New Year's, four days at Easter, two days at Pentecost, May Day, Bastille Day, V-E Day, Ascension Day, and the thanksgiving day in honor of the local patron saint in November. Only one of these, Labor Day, May 1, is regularly a paid holiday, but the manager thinks there are too many holidays and that they interfere with the maintenance of good production.

Neu insisted that one thing which kept wages low was the high scale of taxes and assessments which the company had to pay on wages—amounting to 40 to 46 per cent. First of all there was a general 5 per cent payroll tax. Then there were the various social-security taxes—a 10 per cent tax for illness and old-age funds (the workers contributed 7 per cent to this, but this was the only fund to which they had to contribute); there was a tax of 16 per cent for child care, and another 5 per cent for accident insurance (this varied with the industry). In addition there was a local factory fund for gifts for weddings and births, flowers for funerals, and so forth, for which the company contributed funds equal to 5 per cent of the payroll. Finally, paid holidays were equivalent to a payment of from 1 to 5 per cent of the payroll. An increase in wages also always meant an increase in taxes and assessments. When an increase in wages of ten cents an hour actually cost the factory four-

teen cents an hour, the inevitable consequence was a tendency to hold wages down.

As far as the Schuman Plan is concerned, M. Neu felt that this integration of the coal and steel industries of France, Germany, and neighboring countries, was not a good thing for his company. He said that it had not affected them yet, but it would, because the German factories could undersell them.

The foundry manager was well aware that the wages of the workers were low, but he felt that there was very little he could do and still stay in business. The cost of living currently was much too high, he said. His father, who was only an ordinary worker, was able to build a good house and raise a large family; now the son, a factory manager making at least four times as much as his father ever did, finds that he cannot do nearly so well.

Indeed when one compares the wage scales and prevailing prices, it is difficult to see how the average worker's family made ends meet. Some idea of the problem could be had after discussing the family budget with a Sarreguemines housewife. She was twenty-eight years old. Her husband, thirty-two, was a worker at another local factory. They had a little girl four years old and a boy of two. Working forty-eight hours a week, the husband made about \$60 a month at his factory job. Then they received an allowance of \$30 a month from the government for their children. In addition the husband sold a weekly magazine from which he earned \$14.30 a month. There was medical assistance from the government, but in case of sickness it is necessary to pay the doctor and the pharmacist at once, and then to apply to the government for reimbursement. They were living in an old, uncomfortable flat of two rooms and kitchen that cost \$9.50 a month. Their monthly bill for gas and electricity was about \$3.70, and coal cost \$65.70 for the year. They were looking forward to moving into a new apartment in a low-cost housing project in the fall. Then they would have two bedrooms, living room, kitchen, and bath, but the rent would be about \$17 a month. Nearly all of the remaining \$86 of the monthly income now went for food and clothing. The housewife said that it cost more to clothe her little girl than herself. She could get a cotton dress for about \$3.40, but one for the little girl might cost \$6.29. She said that she got about one dress a year; the one she had on was three years old. One month they would get something for the girl, and the next something for the boy. This month the little girl was scheduled to get new shoes. The young woman said that she used very little in the way of cosmetics; she goes to the hairdresser about once a month. They go to a movie perhaps once a month, and spend very little for any other recreation or amusement. They have a little wine only on Sunday, though she expressed some concern that the doctor had suggested that the husband ought to have wine with every meal for his health,



but they could not afford it. Payday comes every two weeks, and she figures her budget very closely for each period. There is no installment buying, and they have no debt. They figure closely to make the income meet the necessities from week to week. Probably what makes it possible for a French worker to get along on substantially less than an American worker would consider essential is the relatively low rent and the fact that he does not drive an automobile.

In France as a whole the cost of living remained relatively stable from 1951 to 1957, and increased productivity together with the steady prices permitted a gradual rise in the living standards of French workers, but uncertainty and danger of inflation still lay ahead. Prices rose 7 per cent in the first five months of 1958, but then rose only 8.9 per cent in the next twenty months—to June 1960.

A young professional man and his wife, who had been saving their money for the last ten years, were making plans for building a new house. They had their eyes on a lot in the new subdivision which was being developed on the high ground about a mile north-east of Sarreguemines. After living in an upstairs apartment near the center of the city for the last several years, they were looking forward to having a garden and enjoying "suburban living." They planned to build a small house of four rooms and bath, with garage. The house cost about \$7,500. The houses which Levitt was erecting in Paris for \$10,000 did not seem particularly low-priced to them. In spite of the war reconstruction which had been going on, there seemed to be no scarcity of construction workers in Sarreguemines. They were available and willing to go where the money was. Sometimes there is a house standing half-finished—a place where the owner has run out of money, and the work crew has moved on to another place where funds are available. People try to save their money for house-building, and to pay as they go. A bank loan is said to require as high as 20 per cent interest, and every effort is made to avoid borrowing from the banks for this purpose.

The towns in eastern Lorraine have a somewhat different appearance from those elsewhere in France. Red brick buildings are far more common than in other areas where most of the buildings have been of stone or *béton*. Red is the predominant color; other cities are mostly gray and yellow. The villages of Lorraine retain their characteristic appearance, where stables and living quarters are joined in rows along either side of the street, and manure sometimes is piled in front. Indeed it is said that the prosperity of a farmer in these parts may be gauged by the size of the manure pile on the street in front of his house and barn. This seems to be typical of Lorraine. It does appear in Habkirchen, across the Blies in the German territory of the Saar. But only three or four miles south of Sarreguemines in Alsace (department of Bas Rhin), it is not true. And the traditional manure piles in the streets now are absent from

many of the villages east of Nancy, such as Pettoncourt, Chambrey, Hellimer, and St. Jean Rohrbach, where they were in evidence during the war.

This corner of France, where Moselle meets Bas-Rhin, Alsace meets Lorraine, Lorraine meets the Saarland, this frontier region of Alsace-Lorraine, known for generations as "the football of Europe," frequently is referred to locally as a no-man's land. France generally, in spite of rather heavy immigration after World War I, is a homogeneous country, with general similarities throughout most of the land in nationality, language, and religion. But here differences in national sentiments, language, and religion are sharp, and sometimes bitter.

A part of Roman Gaul from the time of Caesar, this region had its modern linguistic boundaries more or less established when the German tribe known as the Alemanni, encouraged by the military weakness of the late Roman Empire, moved in shortly after the Battle of Châlons (451). In the division of Charlemagne's empire among his three grandsons by the Treaty of Verdun in 843, the area of Lorraine and Alsace went to the middle kingdom of Lothair, who retained the imperial title. Centuries of conflict followed for control of this territory between the kingdoms and principalities which arose on either side—German on the east, French on the west. During most of the next seven hundred years most of Alsace and Lorraine (under the rule of various kings or dukes, or, in Alsace, with a number of free cities held separately) were subject to the German Holy Roman Empire. Then in the mid-sixteenth century France won control of the three Bishoprics of Toul, Metz, and Verdun, and after the Peace of Westphalia (1648) the France of Louis XIV held sway over virtually all of Alsace and Lorraine, though the Duchy of Lorraine was not finally and formally incorporated into France until 1766. French rule during the two centuries after the Thirty Years' War did not always have the enthusiastic support of the local population, but then strong, futile opposition arose in 1871 against the annexation of Alsace and about half of Lorraine by Germany. It became the imperial province of Alsace-Lorraine, but French rule was restored after World War I. Germany again annexed Alsace-Lorraine after Hitler's victories of 1940, and this time it was divided between the German states of Baden and Westmark. This period of German rule lasted only until the arrival of the American and French (in Upper Alsace) forces in 1944.

As were a great many young men of this area, Marcel Baue, then a boy of seventeen living with his parents at Joinville, near Metz, had been drafted into the German army. Assigned to a flak battery of the Luftwaffe, he had been sent to the eastern front. Truly he was following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. They, too,

had been drafted into the German army and sent to the eastern front in World War I. Indeed, young Marcel found himself going through the same villages of Courland and Livonia where his father and grandfather had been nearly thirty years before. His grandfather's nationality had changed so much that he hardly knew to which country he belonged. He was born a citizen of France, but he was transferred with his home town to Germany in 1871; returned to France in 1919; retaken by Germany in 1940; restored to France in 1944. Marcel Baue was captured by the Russians near Riga, but he escaped to the British, and was permitted to return to his home. Now he and his English wife operate a business school in Sarreguemines.

American soldiers are seldom seen in Sarreguemines now. A few may turn up for the great Mardi Gras carnival, but otherwise the only ones seen are those going through on supply convoys. There are no major American installations in this vicinity. Yet stories still circulate that suggest an unfriendly impression of American soldiers who are considered to have indicated a disregard for the property and feelings of the local inhabitants during World War II. According to one common story, an American unit moved into the vicinity shortly after liberation. One day some of the men took a piano which they had picked up somewhere to the old château. They offered to sell it to the lady there for a low price. She accepted. They took the money and went downtown to celebrate. They told the bartender how they had earned their money. He told them they should have come to him; he would have given them more. All right, they said, they would sell it to him. They went back to the château and demanded that the lady give the piano back to them. She called the police. That night, while many of the people were gathered in a celebration of the liberation, the château burned. Universally the fire was attributed to the disgruntled Americans.

Similarly, one of the local residents tells of the burning of his old family home near Buchy—again after the liberation. The French were there, then the Germans came, then the Americans came, and then the house burned.

This is a bilingual community, but the local German dialect, a language like that of Luxembourg, is predominant among most of the people, though French perhaps is more frequently heard in the business and government houses. French is required in the schools, but most of the children probably have learned to speak and think in local German before they get to school. After pupils have completed two years of French in elementary school, German is offered. German-language movies as well as French films are shown in the local cinemas, but the showing of German films is restricted to about one a month. When they are shown, they usually draw big crowds,

for the subtleties of humor and character probably are better understood by more than are those in French. Several German-language newspapers circulate.

Something else found in Sarreguemines that is not common in France is a strong Protestant (Lutheran) Church. There is a village about twelve miles south of here which is entirely Protestant, where the wife of the minister also is a preacher. In France as a whole not more than 2½ per cent of the population is Protestant. In Alsace-Lorraine perhaps one-fourth of the population is Protestant. But support for Catholicism is also strong.

As has been mentioned, the "problem of Alsace-Lorraine" involved mainly the questions of church-school relations. During the period between 1871 and World War I, when Alsace-Lorraine was being governed as a part of Germany, the Third Republic adopted some far-reaching anticlerical legislation. Church and state were separated by a law of 1905, and the Catholic Church, thereby disestablished, was thrown on its own financial resources. Previously the relations between church and state had been governed by the Concordat of 1801 which Napoleon had concluded with the Vatican. Under its terms the government had paid the salaries of the clergy, and the Church had had almost complete control over French education. Now all this changed. Salaries for the clergy no longer could be drawn from the government, religious instruction was removed from the schools, religious orders no longer could organize public schools; in fact they had to have the special consent of the government to exist.

Meanwhile the German government had permitted the previous arrangements to continue in Alsace-Lorraine. When the lost provinces were restored in 1919, the educational system and the church-government relationships were different from those for all the rest of France. And France is a highly centralized unitary state where there is no place for such local differences. At first the French government indicated a willingness to permit this anomalous situation to continue. But soon efforts developed to "assimilate" the returned provinces, and to insist on extending the general religious and educational system to that area. In 1927 Premier Raymond Poincaré resorted to drastic action which reached a climax on Christmas Eve with wholesale searches, seizures, and arrests of people opposing the government's policies. This failing to produce results, Poincaré returned to a more conciliatory approach, but that had little positive result, either. The government went along with a compromise to permit an "inter-confessional" school system where children were sent to a common school without regard to religious instruction. Now the three departments continue to have a school system apart from the rest of France. Actually education never has been secularized here, and these departments continue to operate

under a law of 1850 which guarantees that public education shall include religious instruction.

During the Vichy regime, between 1941 and 1944, sizable governmental subsidies were voted for private, that is, Catholic schools. These were withdrawn after the liberation, and one of the liveliest political issues of the Fourth Republic was whether governmental subsidies ought to be restored for church schools. But this was an issue which did not touch Alsace-Lorraine, for here the public schools still are organized and staffed in a way satisfactory to Catholic leaders, and there was no need for separate Catholic schools.

The political complexion of Sarreguemines is not a great deal different from that noted in Orléans or Nancy, though here the Catholic MRP was the strongest party under the Fourth Republic. Deep-seated political divisions exist here, on the one hand, and lack of enthusiasm for politics on the other. On this sensitive frontier expressions of patriotism for France are most fervent, but expressions of neutralism are common. The division of sentiment really is not between feelings for France and feelings for Germany, primarily; it is between France and Alsace-Lorraine. An Alsatian often tends to think of himself first as an Alsatian. At the same time, some people feel that they prospered as much under the Germans as under the French, so why oppose the strengthening of Germany? Many people do not take a great deal of interest in politics. Some of them say, "Only fools and those who want something are active in politics."

A businessman observed that there has been more reconstruction accomplished in the Saar than here. "Here there is too much government help," he said. "There, everyone must help himself." Showing his impatience with the Fourth Republic, one went so far as to say, "French democracy is no good. Where formerly you had one king to support, now you have six hundred deputies to support—each one a king."

On the other hand there are strongly nationalistic Frenchmen here who shun people whom they know collaborated with the Germans during the war, and they boycott the shops and business establishments of the wartime collaborators. A coal miner who lives in Morhange and works in a mine some distance to the north had left his home there in November 1940 to join the FFI Resistance. (His sister and her husband were at Saint-Junien, just seven miles from Oradour-sur-Glane at the time of the massacre). He says that there were many Germans here during the war, and there still are many Germans—Nazis, too—here now. He is strongly opposed to any scheme for German rearmament. As far as he is concerned there is little to choose between Chancellor Adenauer, or other German leaders, and Hitler. His greatest concern is to avoid another war. He says that he is not for the United States or for the Soviet Union, but only for France.

In the past there has been agitation at various times for autonomy for Alsace-Lorraine, or even for separation from France. This agitation reached its climax in 1929 when the French Chamber of Deputies devoted more than two weeks to debating the problems of Alsace-Lorraine. In addition to opposition to French government attempts to extend the secular school system to the recovered provinces, there was further opposition to political assimilation into the French unitary state after a measure of local autonomy enjoyed under German rule. Although the Germans had ruled this imperial territory arbitrarily until 1911, in that year, moved to grant some concessions to local sentiments, the Kaiser's government authorized a local provincial legislature to sit at Strasbourg. This was abolished after the restoration of French rule in 1919, and the territory was reorganized into the three departments.

As we have seen, the French government did make concessions on the church-school question, but a local legislature was out of the question. Autonomist demands arose again in 1953 at the time of the trials of the Alsatian soldiers for the Oradour massacre, but these subsided with the passage of the amnesty law by the French parliament. There still is some feeling, of course, in favor of local autonomy—within the French Republic, or out of the French Republic. An ideal arrangement in the eyes of some would be a neutralized, independent federation of Alsace-Lorraine, the Saar Territory, and Luxembourg, but such projects do not appear to be taken seriously. It is unlikely that advocates of independence from France have ever constituted an active majority.

The inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine bitterly opposed the transfer of their provinces to Germany in 1871. The deputies from Alsace-Lorraine for the National Assembly at Bordeaux in 1871, elected while the victorious German troops were in occupation, spoke out vigorously and voted unanimously against German annexation. When matters went against them, they declared, "Handed over, in contempt of all justice, and through an odious abuse of force, to the domination of the foreigner, we declare once again null and of no effect a compact which disposes of us without our consent. . . ."<sup>1</sup> Deputies later elected to the German Reichstag continued their opposition. Alsace had had a long tradition of democracy, and Alsations had been enthusiastic for the principles of the French Revolution. The "Marseillaise" was composed at Strasbourg. The return of Alsace-Lorraine and *La Revanche* became slogans in Alsace-Lorraine as well as throughout France. President Wilson was expressing what Allied peoples everywhere assumed when he listed as one of his Fourteen Points that French territory should be

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Albert Guerard, *The France of Tomorrow* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), 61.

evacuated and restored, and "the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine" should be righted.

Interestingly enough, a survey of French opinion in 1954 showed that among the areas of France which had experienced war directly, Alsace was most disposed to show leniency toward the Germans, while the people of neighboring Lorraine were most severe in the opinion that Germans basically like war, and they were least disposed to believe that most Germans had changed since the war. (The west-central region, around Oradour-sur-Glane, where 52 per cent of the people questioned thought that the Germans loved war, as against 55 per cent in Lorraine, was second among the regions in this kind of anti-German sentiment.)

Undercurrents of suspicion and hostility and division probably will continue among many people of the eastern frontier region of France for some time. But most are agreed on one thing—peace—and much of the present-day division of opinion is concerned with how best to insure it. This is a crossroads of war, and the people here are anxious to avoid invasion and occupation from any direction again. Given peace and amiable relations between France and Germany, they can prosper. Given any general European war, it is almost inevitable that once again they will find themselves dwelling on a battlefield.

# 14

## The Saar Question

North of the broad-angle Y formed by the confluence of the Blies and Saar rivers, a tongue of the Territory of the Saar comes to the doorstep of Sarreguemines. A bridge crosses the narrow Blies from the northeast section of Sarreguemines, and here is an international frontier post flying the flags of the Federal Republic of Germany and of France. Actually suburbs of Sarreguemines extend to the other side of the river, and numbers of workers each day pass this post going to their jobs. With proper identification, it is a simple matter to cross the frontier. However, baggage is subject to inspection against the entry of forbidden or restricted items.

Rich deposits of coal, estimated to be greater than those of all France, have made this district of about 990 square miles and 960,000 people highly significant for the economy of central Europe. An important steel industry, based on the nearby iron ore of Lorraine and the local coal adds to this importance, so that economic resources, in addition to the strategic position long attributed to the region, make of the Saar Basin a traditional object of international rivalry.

Frequent railway trains run between Sarreguemines and Saarbrücken, ten miles to the north, down the Saar River. The chief city and capital of the Saar, Saarbrücken now has a population of about 110,000—some 20,000 less than its population in 1939. During World War II the industries of the Saar Basin became targets for heavy Allied bombing attacks, and then heavy ground attack as the Third Army, and later the Seventh Army, advanced through the area. An important railway center as well as an important site of heavy industry, Saarbrücken was largely reduced to rubble. Some 65 per cent of the buildings there were reported destroyed, and the smaller city of Saarlouis, another fifteen miles down the river, had



about 75 per cent of its buildings destroyed. Perhaps three-fifths of the total heavy industry of the Saarland was knocked out.

American forces were not able to consolidate their control over the Saarland until March 1945. Immediately, American military government units assumed control of local government. When the Allied governments agreed on granting to France a zone of occupation, the Saar, in accordance with French desires, was made a part of the French zone of occupation.

From the outset, the French government appeared to have as its objective the detachment of the Saar from Germany, and the organization of an autonomous state under French protection, economically integrated with France. France gave special care to the framing of a constitution for the Saar Territory. Elections were held in October 1947 to choose fifty delegates for an assembly which would meet first as a constituent assembly to adopt a constitution, and then would continue as a legislative assembly under the new constitution. In the election, twenty-eight of the assembly seats went to the Christian People's Party, seventeen to the Social Democrats, three to the Democrats, and two to the Communists. Johannes Hoffman, leader of the Christian People's Party, became head of the new Saar government.

Meanwhile, on April 1, 1948, the French fully incorporated the Saar into a customs union with France. In June 1947 the French introduced a separate currency, the Saar mark, to replace the Reichsmark, and five months later this was superseded by the French franc, which now became the sole legal currency. Subsequent economic and financial measures extended French wage and price ceilings, French social-security regulations, and the French tax system to the Saar Territory. All Saar banks were placed under French control. Without indicating what their final disposition would be, the French took over the management of the private as well as the state industries. Some local industrialists had their property confiscated at the sentence of a court.

Amid vigorous protests from the government and political parties of the Federal German Republic, the French proceeded in 1950 to conclude a series of agreements with the Saar government further to clarify and consolidate the French position in the territory. The five principal agreements included a general convention defining the political status of the Saar, an agreement on the economic union, one on the mines, one on the railways, and one on the movement of persons. Neither government would permit discrimination in favor of goods of its own or against goods of the other country. With regard to the coal mines, the Saar agreed to a fifty-year lease to the French government, it being understood that leasing for the whole period would be contingent upon the award of the mines to the Saar by a German peace treaty, and the French agreed to make no

claim to ownership, but to press for the claims of the Saar. The railways of the Saar were to be integrated with the French railway system. Finally, after a time interval, citizens of France and of the Saar were to be free to live and conduct their business in either country. The arrangements were taken to be provisional until the conclusion of a treaty of peace with Germany.

The 1952 election in the Saar was marked by intensive effort on the part of pro-German leaders to turn the election into a plebiscite favorable to returning the Saar to German control. Major pro-German parties were banned and they retaliated by urging their followers to invalidate their ballots. The result, however, was again a decisive victory for Hoffman.

In 1953 the Saar and France, represented by Hoffman and Georges Bidault respectively, settled political and economic disputes by allowing the Saar further legislative and diplomatic freedom and promising larger control over the local production in the region.

German leaders opposed French policy in the Saar at every turn. The German view was that historically and culturally the Saar was German. Protesting against the series of conventions which France signed with the Saar, Chancellor Adenauer pointed out that even though they were supposed to be provisional pending the conclusion of a German peace treaty, actually they created a *fait accompli* which would influence the ultimate peace settlements in favor of the French position.

Serious differences between Germany and France on the Saar question continued for a decade after the end of World War II. After establishment of the West German Federal Republic in 1949, German leaders had an opportunity to formalize and vocalize their opposition to French policy in the Saar. They clashed with the French over the negotiation of agreements between the French government and the Saar which would tend to tie the latter to France, and over the eligibility of the Saar for membership in the Council of Europe. Chancellor Adenauer insisted that the Saar had no right to lease the coal mines to France because the Allies had recognized the Federal Republic as the legal successor to the property rights of the Third Reich. Leaders of opposition parties in Germany were even more vehement than Adenauer, and doubtless this had something to do with the stiffened attitude of the Chancellor. These threads of discord continued through diplomatic conferences over the next several years between Allies and Germans. Negotiations between France and Germany, previously interrupted, were resumed after the 1952 elections. By this time most people were looking for a "European" solution to the Saar problem.

A development which promised to be of great significance for the Saar, Lorraine, and all Western Europe, and which appeared to

minimize the question of sovereignty over the Saar Territory and ownership of the coal mines and steel mills was the Schuman Plan. Offered by the French Foreign Minister in May 1950, the plan proposed to pool the coal and steel resources of Germany and France, and other countries who would join, under a common authority which would encourage the modernization, improvement, and rationalization of those industries, and would insure the supply of coal and steel products on equal terms to all participating countries without discrimination by either tariffs or differential transportation charges. Schuman went so far as to say that adoption of his plan would make war between France and Germany impossible. He saw it as a preliminary step toward real European federation.

After consideration and study which went on for nearly a year, representatives of France, the German Federal Republic, Italy, Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg in April 1951 signed a treaty to establish the European Coal and Steel Community. With the establishment of a common market—in which import and export duties and quantitative restrictions on the movement of coal and steel between members states were prohibited; where discrimination was forbidden among producers, buyers, or consumers in regard to prices or delivery terms or transportation charges; where there would be no limitations on the buyer's free choice of his supplier; where there were to be no state subsidies; and where restrictive practices tending toward the division of markets or the exploitation of consumers were to be prevented—in a free-trading arrangement for coal and steel such as this, it made less difference now which nation controlled the Saar. If the French had insisted on free access to Saar coal for the iron industry of Lorraine, now that was assured. If the French were anxious to maintain a market for Lorraine iron ore in the Saar, now, presumably, that was assured, too.

Plans for European control of the Saar seemed to be bound inextricably with the project for creating a European Defense Community to organize a European army, including German contingents, for NATO. When, after more than two years of consideration and procrastination, the French National Assembly finally rejected the EDC treaty at the end of August 1954, hopes for an early settlement of the Saar question appeared to have died with it. In the face of warnings by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles that there was no alternative, the French Assembly defiantly voted "No." The whole fabric of mutual defense in Western Europe was threatened.

Immediately Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, with the approval of the foreign ministers, called a nine-power conference with plans for restoring sovereignty to West Germany, for making the Federal Republic a member of NATO, and for pooling and controlling armaments. Premier Mendès-France made political autonomy of the Saar and its economic tie with France prerequisite to French approval of

the revised plan for Western European defense. Just when it seemed that the signing of the agreements would have to be postponed because of the deadlock between Konrad Adenauer and Mendès-France, it was announced that Adenauer had agreed to a settlement of the Saar issue.

Adenauer had made a far-reaching concession in surrendering for an indefinite period German claims to the Saar. The French-German agreement provided that the economic union between France and the Saar should continue until the conclusion of a German peace treaty. Eventually Germany was to have economic equality in the Saar. The political administration of the territory now was to be "Europeanized" under the guardianship of the Western European Union—subject to acceptance by the Saarlanders in a plebiscite. The previously banned pro-German parties in the Saar were to be free to campaign against accepting this arrangement in the plebiscite, and to participate in the elections to be held after ratification. But they would not be allowed to agitate against the new statute once it had been adopted. Saarlanders were to have an opportunity to vote on the final status, after a peace treaty, as well as on the interim status provided for in this agreement.

In May things moved swiftly toward a complete settlement of the Saar question. On May 5, 1955, the newly designated French ambassador at Bonn, André François-Poncet, exchanged letters with Adenauer to give effect to the Saar agreements. The new statute for the Saar, placing it under the supervision of the Western European Union, came into effect that same day.

On the whole, Saarlanders seemed to be satisfied with their lot and to welcome the establishment of European supervision over the territory. It had been suggested that in a vote for political union with France or with Germany, Saarlanders undoubtedly would vote for the latter, but that if they were given a third choice, they would vote overwhelmingly for autonomy under general European supervision.

Then, when it appeared that everything was settled except the formal ratification to make of the Saar a "Europeanized" territory, the Saarlanders went to the polls in the promised plebiscite and overwhelmingly rejected the arrangement which had been worked out for them. Everywhere this was interpreted as a vote for Germany, but it seemed to leave the issue between France and Germany about as far from settlement as ever. Perhaps the plebiscite itself was a mistake. Perhaps it would have been better to allow the *modus vivendi* to continue indefinitely without disturbing the "sleeping dogs" of passions waiting to be aroused by the inevitable emotional appeals of the vote in this case.

At last the "final" settlement emerged as time passed. Much to the disappointment of many advocates of European integration or union who had seen in "Europeanization" of the Saar an opportunity for

another big step in this direction, the plebiscite, and the emotional fires which the campaign for votes had rekindled, pointed to return of the Saar to Germany as the only feasible solution. To this the French consented in treaties signed with the Federal Republic on October 27, 1956. The agreement provided political transfer of the Saar to Germany on January 1, 1957, but with guarantees for French economic interests and a three-year transition period for the integration of the economy of the Saar with that of Germany. In return the German Federal Republic agreed to join with France in a four-year program for canalization of the Moselle River so that craft displacing as much as 1,500 tons could go up the river from Coblenz, where it flows into the Rhine, to Thionville, about eighteen miles north of Metz, in the rich iron region. This would afford cheap water transportation all the way between the high-quality coal of the Ruhr and the iron of Lorraine.

As for the Saar itself, French francs would continue to be the official currency until the end of a three-year transition period, when they would be exchanged for Deutsche marks at a rate of eighty-three francs to the mark. During this time the Saar, with certain restrictions to protect French goods, had virtually free trade with both France and Germany. At the end of the transition period, France continued to have the right to export to the Saar the same value of goods exported in 1955 (about \$462,000,000), and the Saar had the right to match the \$280,000,000 worth of goods sent to France in 1955 duty-free. France also obtained a guarantee to receive 90,000,000 tons of coal from the Saar over a period of twenty-five years. This included 66,000,000 tons to be taken from French-operated mines on the Lorraine side of the Saar. Further, France has undertaken to accept 33 per cent of all the coal mined in the Saar.

The pressures of international as well as local politics made it desirable for the French to get a settlement of some kind without further delay. Clearing this obstacle improved the prospects for German participation and French cooperation in security arrangements for Western Europe. With "fires" breaking out all over the French colonial empire, it was most desirable for sources of friction on the frontier of the homeland to be reduced.

Meanwhile, the economy of the Saar had been showing a remarkable recovery from its wartime devastation. The impact of the Korean War and European rearmament had helped stimulate a boom in Saar industries after 1950. But prospects for the region did not appear quite as bright for 1954 and 1955 as for the preceding years. Orders were not nearly as far ahead of production as they had been, and fears were rising that the day was not far away when production would overtake orders—that soon the big companies would be feeling what the small foundry of Sarreguemines already had felt. Still,

the Saar's economy was termed the most prosperous in Europe; the boom here exceeded even that of West Germany.

In some ways the Schuman Plan operated to loosen rather than strengthen the "natural" combine of Lorraine iron and Saar coal. First of all, the removal of the governmental subsidy which previously had kept the price of Lorraine iron artificially low, reduced the competitive position of this ore, so that the Saar got a larger part of its ore from Luxembourg, also available to the common market, and frequently at a more favorable price. On the other hand, the encouragement of the free movement of coal among Schuman Plan countries has tended to cause French steel producers to turn to the Ruhr for a larger part of the coal that they need. Saar coal never could compete with that of the Ruhr in quality; most of the Saar coal is low-grade and unsuitable for coke. Coke manufacturing plants serving the steel industry of the Saar itself always have depended on special coking coal imported from the Ruhr, which is mixed with the local coal to the extent of 15 to 20 per cent. The addition of Ruhr coal, of course, has been no less necessary in Lorraine. A good canal system linking Lorraine and the Rhine makes Ruhr coal accessible by cheap water transportation, and with the removal of other barriers under the Schuman Plan, there was an understandable tendency for Lorraine steel producers to get more of their coal from the Ruhr. Moreover, the easing of trade barriers between the Saar and Germany has caused a somewhat larger share of the Saar steel output to go to Germany, and has permitted Saarlanders to look to Germany for a larger part of their consumer goods.

Coal miners in the Saar earn about five dollars a day—a pay scale which compares favorably with that of the Sarreguemines foundry, for instance, or anywhere in Europe. As in France, family benefits from the state may add substantially to the total income. In addition to the family allowances and other social security benefits, a great many coal and steel workers in the Saar further supplement their incomes by working small farms during their hours off.

Although the Saar is a densely populated district, Saarbrücken is the only city of more than 100,000 people. Separated by patch-quilt strips of crop land and green meadows and forests, the towns seem dark islands in this neatly cultivated countryside. This is no place such as the Gary-Chicago district where one town merges imperceptibly into the next along miles of smoke-covered streets, with the greenery of trees and fields reserved only for the fringes. In the Saar the fields of grain and potatoes and the meadows and woods soften the harsh aspect of the chimneys and the slag piles on the landscape, so that the whole countryside presents an inviting appearance.

With the establishment of the University of the Saar, the Saarlanders for the first time have a university of their own, and are no

longer so completely dependent on other German universities for higher education. Installed in remodeled Nazi barracks on the outskirts of Saarbrücken, this bilingual institution of learning has been expanding rapidly in student body and physical plant. Now it is being called a *European* university. Its teaching staff includes 62 Frenchmen, 62 Germans, 104 Saarlanders, and professors from eight other countries as well. It is developing an Institute of European Studies to offer special studies of European political science and economics, history, geography, literature, and sociology, and to encourage a European perspective in all the departments. J. F. Angellos, rector of the University, has stated, "If there is a tradition which the University is deliberately making its own, it is that of the great universities of the Middle Ages, which permitted a scholar like the Dominican monk, Albert the Great, of Cologne, to study at the Sorbonne, before he himself became a teacher there, attracting scholars and students to the Sorbonne from every corner of Europe."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> J. F. Angellos, "The University of the Saar," *The Statist* (London), February 1955, 32.





PART SIX

LIBERATION  
PLUS TWENTY YEARS



# 15

## Recovery—And Then Some

There is a merry-go-round in Orléans with the traditional galloping horses and many other figures to delight the little riders—a cat, a rabbit, a lion, even an automobile and a bicycle. And there is an old-fashioned oxcart, and beside it, an airplane. This seems to symbolize some of the basic problems of France—or of any relatively old, but relatively progressive country. It is the existence side by side of the very old and the very new, and the difficult adjustments that this demands. It is the pressure of change in the face of an inclination to cling to traditional ways.

For virtually any country in the world a multitude of urgent current problems could be listed. Many problems common to other countries are of course to be found in France, always, to be sure, with differences in detail and complication. Nevertheless a number of problems stood out with special significance for France twenty years after D-Day in 1944. All were inter-related, but for convenience they might be grouped as (1) economic problems, (2) problems of national security, and (3) problems of political stability.

On the whole, France has a relatively well balanced economy in relation to industry and agriculture, town and country, and its various agricultural and industrial products. Relatively rich in land and natural resources, France could be the most nearly self-sufficient country in Europe outside Russia. But the visitor to this attractive country soon gets a certain impression of poverty in the midst of plenty. The impression of high production of all kinds of necessities and luxuries in the factories and on the farms does not always appear to be borne out in the standard of living.

Much of this disparity still can be attributed to the war. It takes years of high production to repair the war damage all across France.

It takes more years of high production to fill the gap left by the war years. It takes more high production to supply the wants of a population which, after years of remaining nearly static, is now expanding.

Fifteen and twenty years after liberation, reconstruction and development still were major activities, and one of the continuing problems of France. Matters of finding materials, of shifting workers from one area to another, and above all, of financing such a big undertaking, all remained. New buildings still are going up on the ruins of the old, from Saint-Lô to Orléans, and to a lesser extent, all the way across the face of France to Sarreguemines.

Before the resignation of General Charles de Gaulle as provisional president in January 1945, his government issued a decree providing for the establishment of a comprehensive plan for the economic modernization and equipment of metropolitan France and the overseas territories. The stated objectives of the program were (1) expansion of national production and foreign trade; (2) increase in the productivity of labor; (3) full employment; and (4) improvement of the standard of living and improvement in housing conditions and community life. Headed by Jean Monnet, the *Commissariat Général du Plan de Modernisation et d'Équipement*—a staff of some twenty professionals—developed, in cooperation with the interested ministries, a broad plan which, after governmental approval, went into effect in January 1947. The plan has since been commonly known as the Monnet Plan. Organized as a four-year program, the Monnet Plan set up mandatory yearly programs for modernization and production in six basic industries—coal, electricity, iron and steel, cement, agricultural machinery, and transport. Later the goals set were modified to bring them into coordination with the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, and the plan was extended to 1953 in order to take full advantage of Marshall Plan assistance. The Modernization and Equipment Plan sought to set common goals, and then to make available to the people concerned the means for attaining them.

In the first six months of the plan's operation, Monnet already could point to a number of encouraging results. But he also found many things not done, and serious obstacles to further success. He recognized that poor crops in 1947 and the difficulty of obtaining needed resources abroad were delaying some aspects of the plan, but he also saw that characteristics and conditions within France itself were endangering the plan. Unwieldy procedures, the habit of routine, resistance to change in many quarters threatened this, as they had every effort at modernization. Most serious of all was the inflation which had set in. Inflation made day-to-day speculation more profitable than long-term investments. It discouraged efforts of those willing to take a broad and long-term view of the economy. It encouraged unproductive labor and agriculture, and it sustained

increasing numbers of middlemen and unneeded services to siphon off any financial gains. The inflationary spiral continued until it finally was checked in 1949. Then the rearmament program in which France shared with the North Atlantic Treaty countries after the outbreak of war in Korea, and in support of French operations in Indochina, set off another spiral which lasted until Premier Antoine Pinay was able to bring it under control in 1952. Undoubtedly inflation and fears of inflation are responsible to a large degree for the preoccupation with immediate material gain which is so noticeable among people around Sarreguemines, and in much of the rest of France as well.

In spite of resistance and unwieldy procedures and inflation, it could be reported in 1953, at the target-date for the revised Monnet Plan, that all major goals had been reached within a margin not greater than plus or minus 15 per cent—except for tractor production, which reached only 70 per cent of the goal. (Imported tractors, however, made up this difference.)

In 1954 the French government put into effect a second Modernization and Equipment Plan to cover the period to 1957. While it was not expected that the new plan would be worked out to the same degree of detail as the first, it did set general goals. It aimed at a 25 per cent increase in the gross national product, including an increase of 20 per cent in agricultural production and 25 to 30 per cent in industrial production. The number of new buildings constructed during the period was to be three times the number completed up to 1953. Much of the new production has had to go into exports, as France faced serious deficits in the international balance of payments. As Finance Minister in the government of Mendès-France, Edgar Faure set up an eighteen-month plan for the shorter-term objectives of an expanding economy. Faure's succession to the premiership on the fall of Mendès-France at least gave him an opportunity to see his plan through. Actually the major goals were achieved over a year ahead of schedule.

By the end of the third plan in 1961, over-all industrial production was 87 per cent above its 1952 level. Industrial recovery has been achieved, and the old levels of production have been far surpassed. The index of industrial production, in 1945 down to about half the production figure for 1938, was 51 per cent above the 1938 figure in 1953, and 65 per cent above in December 1954. The national income, expressed in constant 1952 prices, was nearly 35 billion dollars in 1955—about a 15 per cent increase over 1938. The gross national product in 1957 was 47.9 billion dollars, and in 1961 it was 54.9 billion dollars. The per-capita gross national product of \$1,090 in 1957, while less than half that of the United States, still was greater than that of West Germany, and over double that of Italy. Coal production (excluding that of the Saar), down to 35

million metric tons in 1945 after an output of 47.6 million tons in 1938, reached 57.4 million tons in 1952, and while it was down a little in 1954, productivity in terms of output per man-day was considerably greater. Production rose another 2½ per cent in 1955, and reached a plateau of 59 million tons in 1957. Less than half as many men were working in French coal mines in 1956 as in 1946, but productivity continued to rise, so that their average output per man-day remained the highest in Europe. However, the industrial boom caused consumption to rise in two years from 70 to 81 million tons, and this left an increasing deficit to be covered by imports.

The production of electric power in 1954, about 45.6 billion kilowatt-hours, was nearly two and one-half times as great as in 1938. In 1957 electric power production went up to 58 billion kilowatt hours; it reached 76.5 billion kilowatt hours in 1961. Steel production reached 10.8 million metric tons in 1952, to be compared with 9.7 million tons in 1929 and 6.1 in 1938. Total production in 1954 was down to 10.6 million tons, but it reached 14.6 million tons in 1957, and was up to 17.6 million tons in 1961, and just slightly less in 1962. In the ten years from 1948 through 1957 French aluminum production rose from 64,800 tons to 157,700 tons, and then to 280,000 tons in 1961.

With the return of Charles de Gaulle to power and the collapse of the Fourth Republic in 1958, many Americans who had paid little attention to French economic resurgence during the intervening years began to exclaim about the "miracle of French production" in the next two or three years. Commonly this was regarded as a de Gaulle "miracle," but economic growth had been rapid and steady, in spite of political uncertainties, since the war. The table below indicates the magnitude of French economic growth during the decade prior to the return of de Gaulle:

## GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT

	GNP (Billions of dollars)		GNP per capita (dollars)		Annual rate of increase
	1948	1958	1948	1958	1948-58
France	\$ 16.3	\$ 57.2	\$ 387	\$ 1,257	12.5%
United Kingdom	33.2	63.7	663	1,229	6.4%
West Germany	15.5	52.9	334	1,038	12.0%
Italy	11.9	26.5	260	545	7.6%
United States	257.0	441.7	1,755	2,538	3.8%

Source: ICA Regional Data

At the same time it must be granted that French economic recovery received its initial impetus from the hands of the de Gaulle Provisional Government; it received the further stimulus under the

Fifth Republic to maintain its momentum. One of the most significant aspects of this was the financial and monetary reform necessary to make effective France's participation in the European Common Market which came into being on January 1, 1959—as a result of the treaties of Rome of 1957. These financial measures included balancing the national budget; elimination of various sliding-scale mechanisms by which wages had been tied to a cost-of-living index and thus had tended to aggravate the inflationary trend; devaluation of the franc by 14.93 per cent, and introduction of the new “heavy” franc at a value of one to one hundred of the old; free convertibility of currency for nonresidents, and restoration of the trade liberalization which had been suspended in 1957. This was a period of financial austerity, but there was no serious slackening of industrial expansion.

A fourth Modernization and Equipment Plan went into effect in 1962. Envisaging continuing growth at an annual rate of 5 to 6 per cent, the new plan set goals for 1965 of a gross national product of \$68 billion, steel production of 25 million tons, and comparable increases in other industries. The success which the French have had with state planning in an essentially free economy has become an object of much interest on the part of outside—including American—observers. A secret of the success seems to have been the genius of Jean Monnet, who directed the General Commissariat for Planning and Productivity through its formative years. Under his direction the Commissariat set goals for various segments of the economy, but it avoided authoritarian intervention. It sought to achieve the goals by pointing out to industrial leaders what steps they might take, by providing information, and by bringing together government officials, industrialists, union leaders, and farmers to work out their own means of achieving the desired goals. At the end of 1960 there were only 126,000 unemployed in France, and the average work week was 45.6 hours (workers received overtime rates for work in excess of forty hours a week).

France is the third country in the world in the production of iron ore, fifth in iron and steel, third in bauxite and aluminum, seventh in coal and in lead. A leading dairy country, France is exceeded only by the United States and the Soviet Union in production of milk and butter, and only by the United States in the production of cheese. It produces more meat than any other country except the United States, the Soviet Union, and Germany, and more wheat than any country except the United States, the USSR, and China. The average yield of wheat for all of France during the period 1948 to 1953 was 29 bushels to the acre, but the average was 39.4 bushels to the acre for an area under cultivation of over 2.7 million acres in a group of twelve departments between the Belgian border and the Loire River, and it was 45.4 bushels to the acre from a million acres

in the four departments of Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Aisne, and Oise. For the Nord department alone it was 56.5 bushels to the acre. (During the period 1940 to 1949, the average yield in Kansas, for a cultivated area of 12,137,000 acres, was 15.9 bushels to the acre, and in Minnesota, over an area of 1,248,000 acres, it was 17.7 bushels to the acre.) The average yield for all of France in 1957 had risen to 34.1 bushels to the acre—about 60 per cent above the average United States yield. In the production of motor vehicles, France is third or fourth in the world; its aircraft industry is fourth. In total freight tonnage carried on its railroads and in tonnage of its merchant fleet, it is fifth in the world.

Productivity—in terms of output per man—has been rising steadily and rapidly. An increase of 1.5 per cent a year was about average before the war, but in 1954 productivity was up 5.5 per cent over the preceding year. By 1957 this had risen to 8 per cent, and the rate of increase of industrial production per man had become the highest in Europe.

The real achievements which the French have made in restoring economic prosperity have been obscured somewhat by the booming prosperity which has developed next door in West Germany. In the five years 1948 to 1952, while the over-all industrial production index was rising 31 per cent in France, it was going up 131 per cent in the German Federal Republic. But in comparing French and German prosperity several points should be kept in mind. First, of course, French recovery began well before the German. In Germany recovery really did not begin until the currency reform which the western Allies introduced in 1948. If that year is taken as the base year, the production index shows sharper comparative rises in favor of Germany. But there are more important considerations. Above all it has to be remembered that Germany has enjoyed the almost unique position of being without a major defense burden much of this time. While other countries have been devoting a third or more of their national budgets, and from 12 to 16 per cent of their gross national products to military expenditures, the Germans, forced to rely on foreign occupation troops for security, have been able to devote nearly their full economic resources to recovery. (By 1957 the German Federal Republic was devoting 4.2 per cent of its gross national product to defense.) When other nations found it necessary after the outbreak of the Korean War, and for France the expanding conflicts in Indochina and Algeria, to devote a considerable part of their energies and industries to rearmament, Germans were able to go into highly competitive export markets with promises of early deliveries and low prices.

What now appears to have been another distinct advantage to the expansion of the German economy, though earlier it seemed to be a burden, has been the influx of some twelve million refugees



from the East. This has provided more workers, but also, with the assistance of the German government, it has provided a broader market which has tended to keep German industry competitive. Finally, it has to be remembered that American economic aid went to Germany in just as large amounts as it did to allied countries. When it officially came to an end in 1954, this postwar aid to Germany totaled 3.6 billion dollars. In the six postwar fiscal years, 1946 to 1951, while France was receiving grants from the United States totaling 2.56 billion dollars, Western Germany was receiving 3.54 billion dollars in American grants.

Some particular French industrial establishments have carried through remarkable modernization projects, and enthusiastic efforts at rationalization and persistent insistence on increased productivity are to be found at various places all across the country. The old foundry plant at Pont-à-Mousson, between Nancy and Metz in Lorraine, modernized since the war, cast the iron pipes for the new public water system in Mecca, Saudi-Arabia. A consortium of French metallurgical firms, in the face of German, British, and American competition, won the hundred-million-dollar contracts for building a blast furnace, rolling mill, and other steelmaking facilities at Paz del Río, in the mountains of Colombia. Recent oil strikes in the desolate Landes area southwest of Bordeaux, in Normandy, in other parts of France, give promise of enough domestic production of crude petroleum to provide for a fifth of France's needs. In the spring of 1954 American Overseas Petroleum, Ltd., an affiliate of the Caltex group, joined with the French Société Nationale des Petroles du Languedoc-Méditerranée to prospect for oil in the Orléans area—a project which, if successful, would be especially significant for the American military supply lines, including an American-built pipeline, which pass through this area. Now the French look hopefully to the rapid expansion of the great new oil field in the Sahara; already they speak confidently of this as "money in the bank." Here the production of crude petroleum jumped from nine million metric tons in 1960 to an expected thirty million tons in 1963. With this in the background, the recurring financial crises appear less serious.

Much has been done to modernize the coal mines with the improvement and expanded use of hydraulic drilling, mechanical shovels and other automatic units, automatic loaders, gravity spiral conveyors, belt conveyors and other devices above and below ground, which have improved working conditions and productivity in the mines.

French technology offers many striking new developments. The first atomic pile in France was working by the end of 1948, and a second atomic pile was completed at Saclay, near Paris, in 1952. Other nuclear research and training centers since have been established at Châtillon, Strasbourg, and Grenoble. Industrial centers for

plutonium and uranium are operating at Le Bouchet (south of Paris), Gueugnon, and Marcoule. Two atomic power plants opened at Chinon, and another at Marcoule. Under the second five-year atomic-energy plan begun in 1957, the French intended to invest 1.4 billion dollars into the development of nuclear energy. Half of this amount was allocated to the French Atomic Energy Commission for research, development of experimental models, and for training technicians. It was anticipated that 15 per cent of the young engineers and technicians coming out of specialized institutions and the universities would be hired for the atomic-energy industry. The other half of the funds were to go for industrial development under the direction of Electricité de France. After attaining a capacity of 60,000 kilowatts of electricity from nuclear energy in 1959, the French hope to reach a capacity of one million kilowatts by 1965, and 2,500,000 by 1970.

Since the war, giant hydroelectric projects and steam-power stations have been completed, and others are under construction. The steam-power station at Carling, fired by slimes or coal washings piped in from nearby Lorraine coal mines, will be the largest in Europe when it reaches its anticipated production of two billion kilowatt-hours a year. Even more ambitious, in its own way, is the project on the Rance Estuary, near Saint-Malo in Brittany, to harness the power of the ocean tides. Determined to succeed in a type of project which the Americans gave up at Passamaquoddy Bay in the 1930's, the French hope eventually to obtain here 800,000 kilowatt-hours of electrical power a year. If successful, this will be followed by an even more ambitious project to harness the tides in the bay of Mont-Saint-Michel. They have recently completed at Tignes the highest dam in Europe (higher than Grand Coulee Dam and the Washington Monument in the United States) to develop further the water-power resources of the Alps, and at Donzère-Mondragon they have built one of the most powerful low-fall power stations in Europe as a part of a great Rhône Valley development scheme aimed at land reclamation, irrigation, navigation, and power production. When completed, the Rhône will supply some thirteen billion kilowatt-hours of electricity a year. A similar project is being undertaken on the Rhine between Basel and Strasbourg with the construction of the Grand Canal d'Alsace, where eventually another seven billion kilowatt-hours will be developed annually.

Recently there has been a feeling that many Frenchmen as well as foreigners fail to recognize the outstanding developments in French technology since World War II. Growing pride in these achievements now leaves Frenchmen not content with rather hollow tributes for French culture and patronizing attitudes about technology and industry. They can point with pride to a whole catalogue of accomplishments.

In aviation, the French have developed a spectacular vertical take-off jet model called the "Atar." They claim six of the twenty-one types of aircraft in the world which have attained supersonic speeds, and their "Trident" was said to be the fastest fighter in the world at the time. Their seventy-passenger, twin-jet transport, the "Caravelle," has attracted much favorable attention; it was the first foreign jet airliner to be permitted to land at New York's Idlewild Airport, and it now flies regularly on airlines in the United States. They also developed the first operative jet helicopter in the world.

Almost complete automation has been introduced at the Chantierine glassworks near Compiègne with the benefit of French-devised electronic control systems. At Le Mans they built the first train to be operated by remote control.

The French boast the biggest reinforced-concrete bridge (with independent arches) in the world at Tréguier, the longest road-suspension bridge in western Europe across the lower Seine east of Le Havre, the longest pre-stressed road-railway bridge at La Voulte, the largest aircraft hangar in the world at Orly, the most modern marshaling yards (handling 4,750 freight cars a day) at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, the highest and longest cable lift in the world at Chamonix, the most modern aluminum plant in Europe at Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne, the best equipped laboratory for hydraulic studies at Grenoble, the first electronic telescope in the world at Saint-Michel-de-Provence, and the world's largest radio telescope at Nançais, and at Mont-Louis a 75-kilowatt solar oven which reaches temperatures over 3,000 degrees centigrade, with the largest parabolic reflector in the world.

France is becoming an even stronger competitor in world markets, and the impact of French technology, industry, and engineering is being felt in all parts of the world.

Stepping in where Colombian, Danish, and American engineers had given up, French engineers completed the Anchikaya dam in Colombia. They are building roads, bridges, harbor works, and pipelines and carrying out town-planning projects in some forty countries; they are building hydroelectric plants in the Middle East, South American, Canada, and Australia. French engineers served as consultants in the building of the twenty-one-mile bridge over Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana. Other foreign contracts recently have included the building of a textile mill in Argentina; a rotary cement factory and a fertilizer factory in Belgium; underwater tunnels at Rio de Janeiro and Havana; subways in Lisbon, Lima, and Montevideo; power stations, oil refineries, cement works, a steel plant, a chemical factory, and chocolate factories in Brazil; the highest steel works in the world at Paz del Río, Colombia, which produces 120,000 tons of finished products a year; a multiple fertilizer plant in Germany; a series of ovens in England; steel works, power

stations, and chemical works in India; a steel plant in Mexico; a sugar refinery in Thailand; a sulfuric-acid plant in Turkey, and electrification of the Istanbul railway; a plant at Chattanooga, Tennessee, to use French patents for the production of thorium; a chromium plant in Yugoslavia; a liquid-oxygen factory and a Renault assembly plant in Japan; and a large hospital in Burma. French shipyards are building tankers for many countries, including some of the largest in the world (52,000 and 64,000 tons) for the United States.

French railroads are second to none in speed and punctuality. In the summer of 1954 an electric locomotive pulling three cars attained world's record speed of 152 miles per hour. One locomotive set a speed and endurance record of 32,250 miles in one month. The *Mistral*, with twenty-two cars, runs the 320 miles between Paris and Lyon at an average speed of 76 miles an hour, and attains a maximum speed of 88 miles per hour. The 536 miles from Paris to Marseilles are covered in as little as eight hours. All over France, passenger trains every day cover 12,500 miles at an average speed of 62 miles an hour, and they covered another 19,000 miles at speeds averaging between 56 and 62 miles per hour. French trains have a reputation for being on time. (In 1953 only 6 per cent of all French local and express trains failed to reach their terminal points on time.) Recently a new "ribbon" rail has been introduced on some of the French lines. These tracks are made up of welded, half-mile-long strips resting on grooved rubber soles, and attached to the ties with elastic clips. On this new kind of railway, not only is the "click" eliminated, but wear on the rails and ties is substantially reduced.

Still it is clear that all is not well with the French economy. The standard of living of French workers still is disappointingly low. The forty-six to fifty-seven cents an hour (for a monthly income of about \$95.68 to \$118.56) which construction workers at Saint-Lô were getting in 1957 represented a substantial increase over the scales of 1951, but of course those rates remained far below the average of \$1.75 an hour and \$275 a month which construction workers on government projects were receiving in the United States. The monthly income of the foundry workers in Sarreguemines, \$71.50 to \$128.70, is to be compared to an average monthly pay of about \$280 for foundry workers in the United States. And there is no such disparity as this in price levels between France and the United States.

Nevertheless, there has been a marked improvement. According to the government cost-of-living index, over-all consumers' prices at the end of 1954 had risen over 46 per cent above the 1949 level, but wages during the same period had gone up 110 per cent. Allowing for 2.5-per-cent growth in the labor force and a raise of about 1 per cent in the consumers' price index in 1955, a further 12-per-cent increase in total wages that year meant an increase in the

average worker's purchasing power of approximately 8 to 9 per cent. The minimum wage, set at 100 francs (about twenty-one cents) an hour for the Paris area in 1952, was then tied to the consumer price index. Any rise of 5 per cent in the index would require an increase in the guaranteed minimum wage. Only in 1957 did prices rise more rapidly than wages.

The government did in effect raise the minimum wage to 121.5 (old) francs in October 1954, and to 126 francs in April 1955. It must be remembered, too, that family benefits, overtime pay, and bonuses added substantially to a worker's pay. The average actual monthly income of a single worker in the provinces in mid-1956 was \$87, while a married man with two children received, on the average, \$121, and one with five children received \$189. The comparable figures for workers in the Paris area were \$111, \$149, and \$219. Wages rose another 8.3 per cent in 1958, 6.2 per cent in 1959 (about the same as prices), and then 8 to 9 per cent in 1960.

Housing (other than on the black market) is much less expensive in France than in the United States, but it is critically short. The widespread war destruction, and priorities for restoring other buildings; rigid rent controls which discourage the construction of rental housing; the further complication which has arisen from the competition of American soldiers for housing in certain areas—all these contributed to the serious housing shortage which has continued since the war. Yet it cannot be denied that considerable improvement has come within the last few years. Only 71,000 new dwellings were completed in 1950, but that rose to 320,000 in 1958 and 1959. Still it was difficult to restore war damage and keep up with a population expanding by 380,000 a year.

An ambitious land-reparceling plan—a program to consolidate farm lands in those areas of France where individual holdings have developed into a patch-quilt of fields isolated by intervening fields belonging to other owners—has been only partially successful, though it was a plan which needed no materials and for which, according to Monnet, the outlay involved could be recovered in six months' time. It is a program regarded as essential if the best use is to be made of the tractors and other machinery now becoming available in increasing quantities, and if maximum agricultural yields at lowest costs are to be obtained. But one of the things which has made reparceling difficult also is one of the factors tending to make for social stability in France—the fact that 67 per cent of the farms of France are owned by the people who work them. Still, some seven million acres were reparcled between 1945 and 1959. At the same time the number of tractors on French farms increased from 54,000 to 425,000.

Something needs to be done about taxes—not only about the traditionally inequitable tax burden, but the particular situation

where various social-security contributions amount to a total tax on wages of as much as 45 per cent, which inevitably constitute a serious drag on the wage levels.

But, as many have pointed out, it is far easier to diagnose the ills of the French economy than to effect a cure. The difficulty is in going against the special interests in various segments of the economy—to follow through with a program in which some uneconomic industries, merchants, and farmers are bound to be hurt, at least in the short term, in the interest of the national economy as a whole. The most serious immediate financial problem in the mid-1950's was the serious shortage of foreign exchange—a shortage aggravated by early frosts in 1956, the Suez operation and the resultant shortage of oil, and military operations in Algeria. In a way this situation arose out of the very expansion of the French economy, for resources were going into domestic industrial expansion rather than into exports. Then, in 1958, the pendulum swung the other way. After balance-of-payments deficits of 830 million dollars in 1956, and 1.41 billion in 1958, surpluses began to appear. Foreign exchange reserves had fallen to 645 million in 1957, but by the end of 1961 had risen to nearly three billion dollars.

An especially hopeful development has been French participation and leadership in the movement toward European economic integration. An important beginning was made with the establishment of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation—set up in April 1948 to coordinate Marshall Plan aid—and the European Payments Union, a monetary clearing house for European currencies. Then the European Coal and Steel Community, one of the most far-reaching steps of the century, went into effect in 1953 under the leadership of the Frenchman who was largely responsible for the whole conception, Jean Monnet.

The Coal and Steel Community had little more than begun operation when the Dutch government raised the question: Why not proceed all the way to a common market for all products? Discussions began almost at once for a European Common Market that gradually would eliminate customs duties among the participating states, and set up a single tariff for goods coming into the Community from the outside. After a series of conferences during the next several years, foreign ministers of the six states in March 1957 signed a treaty at Rome which called for a gradual transition—three stages extending over a period of twelve to seventeen years—to put into full effect the common external tariff and common trade policy.

Another treaty signed on the same day provided for a European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). France, the acknowledged leader in the development of atomic energy on the Continent, thus

joined with the other members of the European Economic Community to coordinate research, establish equal access to source materials, and create a common market (one year after the coming into force of the treaty) for products to be used in nuclear industries. Both the Common Market and Euratom became effective January 1, 1959.

Soon there were signs that these steps toward European economic integration were having salutary effects on French industry.

Actually the early success of the Common Market exceeded most expectations, and the Six agreed to an acceleration of their internal tariff barriers—the third scheduled 10-per-cent cut was advanced by one year. Then the most difficult problem of all—agricultural policy—was largely settled by an agreement of January 1962. France, as did the other members, had a program for storing surplus crops, and paying subsidies to farmers, even though the Six as a whole were net importers of agricultural products. This was a matter of special concern for France since half of the arable land of the Six lies within her territory. The new agreement provided for a transitional period of seven and one-half years, starting on July 1, 1962, for achieving a single agricultural market. During this time a common European Guarantee and Guidance Fund will replace individual country programs in the granting of subsidies for certain exports and for absorbing surplus crops within the Community.

Coordination of agricultural policy, and the implications of such arrangements for Britain's relations with other countries of the Commonwealth and with other members of the European Free Trade Association (the "Outer Seven"), were indeed major stumbling blocks in negotiations for British entry into the Common Market, which broke up in January 1963 after a virtual French veto.

One of the dominating forces in French politics and economics is the urge for peace and security. Peoples in all countries, to be sure, profess a longing for peace and security, but the expression of this demand in France is of a different order from what one finds, for instance, in the United States. Sometimes Americans seem to fluctuate between extremes of pessimism and optimism in their expectations for peace. At one time some Americans seem unwilling to look at unsavory facts and assume, without knowing why, that peace has been secured. Then when something happens, they may be moved to abandon at once all hopes for peace. The French tend to hold to a position between these extremes. Their bitter experiences with war have left a deep determination to avoid war in the future if it can be done in any way which does not jeopardize the national existence. They have not forgotten invasion and occupation. They remember Oradour-sur-Glane, Saint-Lô, and Robert Espagne, and they also remember the Marne, Verdun, and the Aisne. Yet con-

cern about peace and security does not dominate the daily conversation of ordinary people. On the contrary, they seem rather less disposed to talk dangerous international incidents or situations into war scares than sometimes seems to be the case in the United States. In the spring of 1951 a number of American tourists canceled steamship and airline reservations to Europe because they shared a rather widespread fear that general war would break out that summer. But in France (and other European countries) much less talk and concern about the likelihood of immediate war was apparent than in parts of the United States. It was the same during crises in 1956 and 1961.

The French do fear war in general. World War II seemed to justify the French obsession during the 1920's and 1930's for security against Germany, and there still is something of an underlying fear in that direction, but one of the most remarkable developments since the war has been the French-German reconciliation. In World War I France suffered over six million casualties, including 1,363,000 killed. This is nearly three times the total number of casualties that the United States has suffered in all its wars, from the Revolution to the Korean conflict. With a much smaller population, and participating actively in full-scale operations for a much shorter period than the United States, France in World War II suffered virtually as many total casualties as the United States—over a million; and 462,000 deaths exceeded those which the United States suffered in all theaters of a global war in nearly four years' time.

In the two great wars of this century, one of every two French homes suffered directly. Altogether, 24 per cent of all Frenchmen lost close relatives in those wars; 28 per cent had their homes destroyed, looted, or seriously damaged; and 19 per cent were themselves wounded or suffered injury to their health. A large proportion of Frenchmen still resent and mistrust the Germans, though many of them see a need and hope for reconciliation. According to a survey of French public opinion published in the magazine *Réalités*, 54 per cent of the people questioned in the spring of 1954 favored French-German reconciliation though two years later this number had dropped to 49 per cent. No less than four-fifths of those interviewed felt that Germany deserved any hardships suffered as a result of postwar occupation. Some 39 per cent gave the opinion in 1956 that the German mentality had not changed since the Hitler period. The French tend to see the Germans as disciplined, hard-working, and energetic, but also cruel, arrogant, and militaristic. Significantly, the younger people in France are less hostile toward Germany than are their elders. Fully 60 per cent of the persons between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five interviewed in the opinion survey favored a Franco-German rapprochement. Seven and eight years later this view had become dominant.



Obligations under NATO, commitments in North Africa, and support of long colonial wars have made military expenditures a real burden for the French economy and the French nation since World War II. While wars continued in Indochina and Algeria, military expenditures accounted for about one-third of the annual national budget. In 1954 the military budget, not counting such items as veterans' pensions and war damages, amounted to over 28 per cent of the whole. The annual cost of the war in Indochina to France through 1953 was more than double the annual amounts of American aid granted to France. Moreover, the war in Indochina was a serious drain on French military leadership. It was said that casualties among officers each year exceeded the total number in the graduating class at the French military academy. By 1954 there had been nearly 80,000 casualties, including about 1,500 officers, among the regular French forces in Indochina. The armistice that Premier Mendès-France agreed to at Geneva in the summer of 1954 seemed to bring a sigh of relief throughout France. Yet the Indochina struggle was hardly out of the way when further troubles erupted in Algeria, with even greater costs in blood and treasure.

As in the period between the world wars, France looks to a system of alliances for security. But there is a big difference. After the United States and Great Britain failed to enter into the mutual assistance treaties with France which had been promised at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, the French had to rely upon alliances with small European powers until the conclusion of the alliance with Soviet Russia in 1935. After World War II, France immediately entered into long-term alliances with Great Britain (the Treaty of Dunkerque) and with Soviet Russia, elaborated plans for defense with Britain and the Benelux countries in the Brussels Pact, and then became a key partner in the North Atlantic Treaty, involving an effective alliance with the United States. And now, the admission of Germany into the North Atlantic Treaty constitutes that rarest of all phenomena, an alliance between France and Germany. A treaty concluded in January 1963 further emphasized the new French-German cooperation. Probably the most immediately significant development has been the return of the American army to France to maintain a line of communication across that country. In this project, the alliance is made firm, with American Communications Zone Headquarters in operation at Orléans, and American soldiers on the ground all across France, developing a supply organization in which the United States and France have made themselves virtually indispensable to each other.

Under the Fourth Republic, cabinets came and went with as great a frequency as ever. Frenchmen as well as foreigners were disgusted with the political instability that the long parade of short-term

premiers seemed to indicate. Young people have voiced disappointment that more young leaders have not come to the fore since the war. But when strong leaders did appear, they seemed unable to make much headway.

When Pierre Mendès-France came into office as premier in the summer of 1954—much to the surprise of many political observers—it seemed that a fresh breeze had blown into the stagnation which appeared to be setting in. Energetically attacking one after another of the big, critical problems which had been shelved for months or years, he was able for a time to lift the whole nation out of its frustration and cynicism, and even, to some extent, to recapture some of the hopes and expectations of 1944. It was a surprise to many that this government—with a premier willing to do something immediately to end the war in Indochina, to force EDC to a vote, and then to push a vote on the alternative agreements for German rearmament, to get an agreement on the Saar, to look for a new policy in North Africa, and above all, to push through far-reaching economic reforms, not to mention his antagonism of the wine industry by discouraging such generous use of their products—could last as long as it did. But at last he too fell—a victim of the system.

Late in 1955 Edgar Faure, successor to Mendès-France, created consternation among his political rivals by resorting to the almost unheard-of expedient of forcing a dissolution of the National Assembly after he had suffered a second vote of no-confidence. This brought on the parliamentary elections some months sooner than had been expected. The results of the election held on January 2, 1956, were widely interpreted as showing greatly increased strength of extremists in France. Probably the most striking development was the election of fifty-two deputies belonging to the extreme right-wing Union et Fraternité Française (Poujadists) dedicated to the nonpayment of taxes and pledged to vote as directed by their leader. At the same time the Communists showed a sharp increase of nearly 50 per cent, from 103 seats in the old assembly to 150 in the new. However, these gains for extremists did not actually reflect a comparable change in sentiments of the voters. The result was due in large part to some changes in the electoral procedures; and failure of parties to form alliances in presenting single lists where that was possible permitted the parties which had cooperated previously to be out voted individually. Actually the Communists suffered a slight loss in their share of the total popular vote, even while they were gaining forty-seven seats. The Communist Party, with 25.5 per cent of the total vote, was still the largest single party by far, but it was not gaining significantly. With de Gaulle's former RPF dividing into several splinters, of which the Social Republican party was most important, and with these groups now disposed to cooperate with the center parties, the center showed an actual

strength of 395 out of the 596 deputies elected from metropolitan France, and an increase in total popular votes over the previous election from 52 per cent to 60 per cent. The new cabinet represented a slight shift to the left from the center coalitions which had guided France since World War II. The new government represented a "Republican Front" made up of Socialists, the Democratic and Socialist Resistance Union, and Radical Socialists, headed by a Socialist premier, Guy Mollet.

The new government won repeated votes of confidence as it faced continuing crises in North Africa and new ones in the Middle East, and the Socialists seemed to gain support by one of those twists of political partisanship which permits a critic to do the thing for which earlier he was criticizing the opposing party. Just as in the United States the Republicans were able to sign a truce in Korea, to permit the loss of some off-shore islands to Communist China, and to acquiesce in a settlement in Indochina which wrote off the northern half of Viet Nam to the Communists—actions which may have been necessary and desirable under the circumstances, but for which the Democrats undoubtedly would have been severely criticized—so the Socialist Resistance Union, and Radical Socialist, headed by a previously they had severely criticized other parties.

In France political parties tend to divide on principle; in the United States the parties tend to unite in order to win elections. In the United States the compromises and the bargains, which for France are carried into the National Assembly in the making up of temporary coalitions, are resolved largely within the parties themselves. In American parties, which appeal for votes to all people, various wings and interest groups tend to hold a veto over the selection of the party's candidates and the adoption of its platform. In a way this is a putting into practice of what John C. Calhoun called the theory of the "concurrent majority." It is true that coalitions among certain groups from each major party tend to form on certain issues in Congress. This is not disastrous, because the majority party usually holds together enough to control the congressional machinery; moreover, the President has important powers of his own, independent of Congress. But when de Gaulle urged an executive for France with powers comparable to those of the President of the United States, he was accused, in the United States as well as in France, of harboring dictatorial ambitions.

At the same time perhaps the French political instability under the Third and Fourth republics has been exaggerated to a degree. Apparently some Americans, when they read that the cabinet had fallen and "France is without a government" had visions of complete anarchy. The old government remained in office, of course, until the successors had been approved and taken over. Day-to-day govern-

mental activities went on as always. The difficulty was that such a "caretaker" government was in no position to make important policy decisions, and France seemed to have a proclivity for coming up "without a government" whenever a serious international crisis developed. The professional undersecretaries and their staffs of civil servants were able to carry on their work from one minister to another and preserved a great deal of continuity in the various departments of the government. Actually the frequent changes in the cabinet often amounted to little more than a "game of musical chairs." Coalitions of the center, with deviations now and then in one direction or the others, ruled France continuously under the Fourth Republic. In any new cabinet there were likely to be a few new faces, and many of the old ones, perhaps assigned different portfolios. In the whole ten-year period from Liberation to the coming into power of Mendès-France, while the United States was having six secretaries of state, only two men, Georges Bidault and Robert Schuman, both members of the MRP, served as foreign minister of France. It should be remembered, too, that the coalitions which operate in the National Assembly are not so prominent at the local level; there is thus a great deal of stability in the municipal and departmental governments.

It has been suggested that, given the type of parliamentary government of the Third and Fourth republics, and given the multiple party system, frequent changes in cabinets were to be expected, and indeed ought to have been encouraged. Whenever a government remained long in power, it may well have meant that important problems were being neglected in order not to alienate any of the support for the coalition on which it rested. A "do-nothing" government could last until one of the crises which it had been forestalling finally overwhelmed it. As Mendès-France had written, "Parliament has the right to withdraw its confidence from the government at any moment; the government must act as if it were sure to last twenty years."<sup>1</sup>

Finally in the spring of 1958, the situation in Algeria precipitated a crisis which revealed serious weaknesses in the whole structure of the republic. General de Gaulle, who had been waiting patiently in the wings for a decade, now was called to the center of the stage. For a time the danger appeared to be very real that extremists would set up a completely dictatorial regime, and men who had feared de Gaulle now turned to him as the one hope for saving republican institutions. He appeared to be the one person who could command the respect and the loyalty of persons of nearly all parties. Once more he stepped forth as the very symbol of French unity, the savior of the French state and French democracy. Adherents of democracy accepted him with some misgivings as the only hope in sight. Others

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Jean Hoffman, "France's New Hope," *Foreign Affairs*, XXX (January 1955), 234.

felt now that France had in effect “played her last trump”; always as past crises had been met there hovered in the background the possibility of the return of de Gaulle if matters could not otherwise be settled. Now he had returned. If he failed, there was nowhere else to turn. He simply *had* to succeed. Despite threats of civil war and growing hostility of the very forces most insistent on his return to power, de Gaulle has been able to conclude the protracted Algerian war and, without depriving Frenchmen of their liberties, has been able to command surprising unity.

Perhaps never before had a major constitution received such an overwhelming vote of approval as did de Gaulle's referendum of October 1958. In the next month's parliamentary elections, all parties except the Communist claimed loyalty to de Gaulle. On the first ballot the Communist popular vote fell from the 25.5 per cent of 1956 to 18.9 per cent, while the Union for the New Republic (an alliance of the Social Republicans, successor to the old Gaullist RPF, and the Republican Convention) polled 17.6 per cent of the vote in the first ballot, and then climbed to 26.4 per cent in the run-off, and won 188 seats in the new National Assembly. The next most numerous bloc of seats went to the Independent Center, with 120. These two groups together thus could control a commanding majority. Designations of “right and left” were not clearly applicable, but there appeared little doubt that the total result was the most pronounced swing to the right since the war. In the election of November 1962, the allied Gaullist parties, the Union for the New Republic (UNR) and Democratic Workers Union (UDT) won 31.9 per cent of the votes cast on the first ballot, and 40.5 per cent on the second ballot. In the new Chamber of Deputies they captured 233 seats, and they had the support of another forty-one deputies elected with the backing of the Association of the Fifth Republic. This meant that the Gaullist group commanded 274 of the 482 seats. For the first time in the history of the French Republic, the government controlled an absolute majority in the National Assembly.

With all of de Gaulle's appeals for national unity, and even with his successes at the polls, there still remain alive and struggling the “two Frances,” as Pierre Cot has described them: one the liberal, democratic France of the Revolution; the second, the authoritarian France of Monarchy and Empire, the France of McMahon, Boulanger, and Pétain. Right after the war de Gaulle was able to marshal something of both groups to his camp. Later, many accused him of having more sympathy with the second tradition than the first, but with his handling of the Algerian situation, the General has again been able to rally both Frances to his support, while alienating the extremes on both sides.

Some twenty years ago, de Gaulle was aware of criticisms of his so-called authoritarian tendencies. In his *War Memoirs*, he writes

amusingly of Wendell Willkie's impressions of him after a conference between the two men:

Because we had conferred together in the High Commissioner's office, which M. de Martel had recently provided with a suite of Empire furniture, Willkie represented me as aping the Napoleonic style; because I was wearing the standard officer's summer uniform of white linen, he saw an ostentatious parody of Louis XIV; and because one of my men spoke of "General de Gaulle's mission," Mr. Willkie hinted that I took myself for Joan of Arc. In this matter, Roosevelt's rival was also his imitator.<sup>1</sup>

In a way de Gaulle represents the achievement of American purpose in Europe since World War II—to see European countries strong and independent. But now we do not quite know what to do with him. Frequently he is criticized for acting in an independent way—his first thought is of France. Often he has acted in a way in which the United States itself probably would have acted under similar conditions. Doubtless he is sensitive to the sting of French defeat in World War II, and perhaps he also resents the lack of enthusiasm which the Allies displayed toward him and toward France during those dark days. He had insisted all along that France should have an equal role with Britain in the determination of international policy. He is chagrined when he sees a NATO command structure where of fifty-six major command assignments, twenty-four went to the British, fifteen to the Americans, and only six to the French. There is resentment for the lack of full American support, including votes in the United Nations, for an Algerian policy which was attempting to avoid extremes at both ends.

Though de Gaulle puts his emphasis on the honor of France, it must be remembered that he has continued to move ahead with European cooperation, and he is not a man of narrow vision. In a remarkable press conference in March 1959 he said:

When two-thirds of the world lead a miserable existence, while certain peoples have at their disposal what is necessary to ensure the progress of all—what is the use of the dangerous wrangling over West Berlin, the (East) German Republic and German disengagement?

For, in our time, the only quarrel worth while is that of mankind. It is mankind that must be saved, made to live and enabled to advance.

We who live between the Atlantic and the Urals; we, who are Europe, possessing with Europe's daughter America, the principal sources and resources of civilization; we, who have mines and factories going full blast, well-tilled soil, railways where run numerous trains, roads choked with cars, ports filled with ships, airports full of aircraft; we, all of whose children learn to read, who build many universities and laboratories, who form armies of engineers and technicians, who can see, hear, read what is of a nature to satisfy the mind; we, who have enough doctors, hospitals, medicines to ease suffering, to care for the sick, to ensure the life

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<sup>1</sup> Charles de Gaulle, *War Memoirs*, II: *Unity, 1942-1944* (New York, 1959), 31.

of most newborn infants—why do we not erect, all together, the fraternal organization which will lend its hand to the others? Why do we not pool a percentage of our raw materials, our manufactured goods, our food products, some of our scientists, technologists, economists, some of our trucks, ships, aircraft in order to vanquish misery, develop the resources and help in the work of less developed peoples? Let us do this—not that they should be the pawns of our policies, but to improve the chances of life and peace. How much more worth while that would be than the territorial demands, ideological claims, imperialist ambitions which are leading the world to its death!

As in 1940 and 1944, de Gaulle in 1958 and 1963 had become the symbol of national existence for France. The final paragraph of de Gaulle's *Call to Honour* was an exhortation written about the bleak year of 1942. It could apply equally to 1958:

A truce to doubts! Poring over the gulf into which the country has fallen, I am her son, calling her, holding the light for her, showing her the way of rescue. Many have joined me already. Others will come, I am sure! I can hear France now, answering me. In the depths of the abyss she is rising up again, she is on the march, she is climbing the slope. Ah! mother, such as we are, we are here to serve you.<sup>2</sup>

Certainly it is true that firm leadership in the national government has been needed for effective economic reforms and for national security. Though now the French have expressed an overwhelming willingness to accept a stronger executive, they have not been willing to abandon individual freedom for the security of dictatorship.

But if the French during the successive years of war and reconstruction have been able to preserve individual freedom—perhaps to as great an extent as in any other country on the Continent—even if at the sacrifice of efficiency in government, and even of efficiency in business, who is to say that France is the loser? Too often, perhaps, Americans have tended since the war to appraise France by the measuring sticks of prosperity indexes, in tons, kilowatt hours, and productivity charts. Even in these respects the popular American appraisal often has been inaccurate, and even according to these standards France comes off very well indeed. So too, in a relative way, did Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, Stalin's Russia. But how have those states performed in preserving individual liberties? In a world where apparently most people have been willing to turn to a strong leader to solve their problems at the expense of their individualism, perhaps something is to be said for a people who cling tenaciously to their individual freedom even though their country is beset by all kinds of difficult and perplexing problems of war and peace. Americans who applauded the efficiency of Mussolini when he drained the marshes and made the trains run on time, or applauded the efficiency of Hitler when he cleared out slums and

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<sup>2</sup> *War Memoirs*, I (New York, 1955), 302.

when he built the *autobahn*, but ignored for the time the loss of liberties on the part of peoples directly affected, may grow impatient if de Gaulle fails continuously to show some similar signs of accomplishment. But surely in France, as in America, liberty still is more precious than efficiency—though the two are not necessarily incompatible.

Pierre van Passen has noted the Latin words, *NEC SPE NEC METU*, "Neither by hope nor by fear," inscribed in 1385 on a panel in the banquet hall of the Château de Breteuil which he visited recently. This may well describe the attitude toward which thoughtful Frenchmen aspire in this second half of the Twentieth Century.



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